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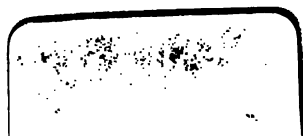
# HISTORICAL LEGENDARY BALLADS



WALTER THORNBURY



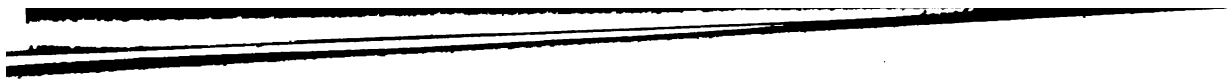
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*HISTORICAL & LEGENDARY*  
*BALLADS & SONGS.*







BACCHUS AND THE WATER THIEVES.

[See page 246.]

*HISTORICAL & LEGENDARY*  
*BALLADS & SONGS.*

By WALTER THORNBURY.

**Illustrated by**

*J. WHISTLER, F. WALKER, JOHN TENNIEL, J. D. WATSON, W. SMALL,  
F. SANDYS, G. J. PINWELL, T. MORTEN, M. J. LAWLESS,  
AND MANY OTHERS.*



**London :**  
CHATTO AND WINDUS, PICCADILLY.

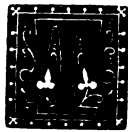
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## P R E F A C E .



O this volume the Author has devoted the pleasantest and sunniest hours of the last twenty-five years. The classified Index which he subjoins will show that his verses are bound together in a certain sequence, and that they have sprung spontaneously out of various lines of study and of thought. He naturally hopes that many of them may contain a certain latent moral purpose, though he has had no special desire to preach, when his main object has been chiefly to express, strongly, picturesquely, and vividly, a feeling of the moment, and to give it dramatic shape.

To his Artists the author is indeed deeply indebted. Good fortune seems to have secured for him some of their happiest moments. Even Mr. TENNIEL, with all the skilled drawing and lavish fancy he has expended on "Punch," never before designed a figure so exquisitely graceful as the Bacchus bound to the mast which forms our Frontispiece. How finely he has given the shrinking of the young God's limbs as the pirates wave their keen knives before his eyes, and threaten him with cruelty and torture! The picture seems to have risen like a beautiful vision out of my verses, yet the writer himself never imagined anything half so fair.

Mr. SANDYS he has to thank for a Greek and a Norse design. His readers will at once admit the extraordinary patience, learning, and intensity with which "The Death of King Warwolf" has been worked out. Any reward must have been inadequate for such a drawing, to which the poem is so lamentably inferior. How sternly and solemnly the old warrior awaits his

## *PREFACE.*

---

death as the flames, keen as curved sword-blades, sweep round his throne! What power, what clear-eyed imagination the artist has shown in thus embodying the story at its very climax!

Mr. POYNTER, an old schoolfellow of the author's, and now Professor in the London University, has expended all his learning, taste, and thought on "The Three Statues." The drapery might be copied by a sculptor, it is arranged with such fine artistic feeling; and over the whole the artist has thrown the solemnity of the subject, and shown, in Pluto's overshadowing arm, the vanity of all things under the sun—even the pure ambition of a great artist.

Among the illustrations executed by eminent young artists, who have, to the bitter loss of the art world, died since the book was projected, we may mention those of F. WALKER, T. MORTEN, G. J. PINWELL, and M. J. LAWLESS.

Mr. F. WALKER'S "Autumn" sketch will recall to the mind of all lovers of art the tender poetry and wonderful sensitiveness that he infused into all his serious work, and which was never a reversal of nature. The drawings of Mr. PINWELL—whose loss he has also to deplore—are full, as usual, of vigorous nature and spontaneity. Mr. T. MORTEN, an attached friend of the author's, and some of whose clever and imaginative drawings, so rich in colour and strong in effect, appear in this volume, died suddenly, a few years since, in the early daybreak of success. The author has also to lament the death of another old and tried friend in Mr. LAWLESS—a young artist of great care and truth, who especially delighted in mediæval work and mediæval details. His "Cavalier" sketch is thought peculiarly spirited.

Some startling drawings by Mr. WHISTLER prove his singular power of hand, strong artistic feeling, and daring manner; while some Oriental scenes by the author's old friend, Mr. A. B. HOUGHTON, serve admirably to show the rich imagination, odd humour, and practised skill of a well-known book illustrator, and an artist of great variety of power.

*PREFACE.*

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The author feels that he owes so much to these gentlemen, that he could say no less; for they have given to his airy nothings "a local habitation and a name," and have caught and fixed down on paper, like butterflies in an entomologist's cabinet, many a fleeting Cynthia of his brain. They have entered into the author's purpose, with a truth and zeal which could not have been found in such art half a century ago; and he begs leave to now thank them, one and all, for their kind efforts.

It is a pleasant collaboration, that of the artist and author; and in this case there has been a mutual sympathy. To the pencils of his own friends and former fellow-workers the writer is indebted for almost all that will give a charm to this volume. If it fails, he shall attribute the failure to himself; and if it is kindly received, he shall repeat his grateful thanks to the surviving illustrators.

44 SOUTH-HILL PARK, HAMPSTEAD.

*October 1875.*





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### Norse Battle-Song.

SWORD and fire our "Flameman" brings  
To scare half the Saxon kings,  
As when wolf leaps from forest den  
Fly the Jarls and Eldermen,

How the monks scoop out the graves  
When they see us on the waves !  
Howl, ye grey wolves of the weald,  
At the gleaming of the shield !

*HOW THOR WENT TO FISH FOR THE MIDGARD SERPENT.*

---

Howl-as in the Autumn wood  
When ye sniff the crimson food !

Where the Pagan warriors tread,  
Grows the green turf moist and red  
Never springs the corn again,  
Where the blood poured down like rain.  
We bring woe to husbandmen,  
In the wold and in the glen.  
Leap, ye fires upon the crags,  
At the flapping of our flags !

How the serf the oxen's goading,  
When he hears us shout to Odin ;  
Where the grey sea sounding o'er,  
Comes the savage cry to Thor ;  
Now we plough the stubborn waves,  
Saxon vassals, dig your graves.

From the Tyne unto the Humber,  
With their wealth our decks we cumber ;  
Thorpe and homestead, rick and barn,  
From the distant Lindisfarne,

To the City of the Plain,  
Where the Saxon monarchs reign,  
We have burnt as flat and bare  
As the moor the foxes share.

Farmers bar them in their stead ;  
Priests leave lovers still unwed :  
At the grave's mouth lies the corse,  
And the mourners cry "To horse !"   
Sickles rust amid the corn,  
Untouched stands the reaper's horn.  
When they see us on the waves,  
Then the sexton digs the graves.

Wheresoever blows the wind,  
There an heritage we find ;  
Wheresoever steers the prow,  
Is our own, as this is now.  
Wessex trembles at our shout ;  
The Land Ravager is out ;  
England, from its north to south,  
Shudders in the white shark's mouth.

---

**How Thor went to Fish for the Midgard Serpent.**

*A LEGEND FROM THE NORSE MYTHOLOGY.*

WITHOUT his magic belt of power, or panoply of war,  
Without his mighty gauntlets, or brazen thunder-car,  
Over the rainbow bridge of heaven the son of Odin went,  
Nor gods, nor men, nor dwarfs, nor elves, knew aught of his intent.

Seeking the haunts of fishermen along the sounding shore,  
Where those who hunt the whale and shark dwelt in the times of yore,  
He came unto a giant's hut with feigned looks of shame,—  
He seemed a fair-haired stripling, as he shouted Hymir's name.

\* \* \* \* \*

At break of day the giant rose, and from a chalky cave  
He dragged his boat, so huge and black, down to the heaving wave.  
Then Thor besought him long and loud, his toil to let him share ;  
But Hymir cried, "Thou puny boy, thine be a meaner care,—

*HOW THOR WENT TO FISH FOR THE MIDGARD SERPENT.*

---

"To sweep the floor, and tend the kine; thou canst not go with me.  
I go to where the walrus dives far 'neath the frozen sea,  
Where the sun doth glow at midnight, and where the storm-birds scream  
In millions round the icy cliffs, and bergs that float and gleam."

"I fear no cold nor tempest," exclaimed the eager youth;  
"I'll serve thee, Hymir, as a serf, with honesty and truth;  
I will not be the first to say, half tremblingly, 'Put back,'  
Though wind blow high, or ice close in, or tempest-cloud grow black."

Hymir relented; then the lad ran to the nearest herd,  
And from the mightiest bull its head wrung off without a word;  
Then both leaped swiftly in the boat, and thrust it off to sea,  
And, bending to the massy oars, drove it on silently.

Three days and nights the stripling rowed, till Hymir bade him stay,  
For they had reached the sunken sands beyond the walrus bay;  
But Thor replied, that farther yet he knew of better shores;  
And silently, with head bent down, drove fiercer at the oars.

The fifth day Hymir, frowning, rose and seized the rower's hand:  
"Now stop," he said, "thou stubborn youth, we've reached the frozen land;  
Turn ere the Serpent swallow us, or ice, with closing teeth,  
Grind us in two, or our frail boat split on the reef beneath."

Thor knew the day and hour had come; he straight uncoiled the line,  
Then thrust the flesh upon the hook, and, without word or sign,  
To Hymir's horror through the surf the stripling tossed the head,  
And down through fathoms of blue wave it sunk as it were lead.

Fast flew the boat, as flies the shark upon the scattering shoal,  
It seemed as if it breathed and strove to reach the distant goal;  
Hymir in vain, protesting, cried, "Turn, turn the boat to land;  
The icebergs are around us now, below us the quicksand.

"The Midgard Serpent the nine worlds girdles as with a chain,  
The All-Father threw him there to roam the unfathomable main;  
That serpent, sprung from Loki's race, rules in the ocean gloom.  
Turn, boy, and draw not down on us the inevitable doom."

Thor answered not, but stood erect, frowning at earth and sky,  
And Hymir trembled when he saw the red light in his eye.  
Far, far the ice-cliffs glittering shone, far the white cliffs stretched forth,  
Until the blue mist rose and hid the boundaries of the North.

*HOW THOR WENT TO FISH FOR THE MIDGARD SERPENT.*

---

The moment that the gory bait dragged on the ocean bed,  
The serpent, gluttonous and fierce, ran at the great bull's head ;  
The anchor-hook, so sharp and strong, deep in his palate drove,  
The keen steel flukes their bloody way into his gullet clove.

Stung with the pain, the serpent curled, lashing the frothing deep,  
O'er shoals and splintering bergs and rocks, where herds of walrus sleep.  
Thor, by the rowlocks, grim and stern, held stalwartly and fast,  
Clenching the cable in his grip until the worse were past ;

Then, with a power divine, he seized the line that held his prey,  
Until the waves rose frothing up and hid that savage fray ;  
He pulled until he forced his feet through the boat's yielding planks,  
And, planted firm, he stood at last upon the granite banks.

Slowly uprising through the waves the Midgard Serpent came,  
Spouting out venom in black floods, and breathing clouds of flame ;  
O'er leagues of ocean spread his coils in scaly mountains piled,  
Far o'er the ice that rolled and crashed in tumult loud and wild.

When Hymir saw the serpent rise, cold turned his coward blood,  
For fast his skiff was settling down into the whirlpool flood,  
And just as Thor upraised his mace, his hunting-knife he drew,  
And with a stroke the massive rope he severed clean in two.

Down, down the wounded serpent sank, writhing round sunken rock,  
Deep in the dark abyss to wail till the day of Ragnarök,  
The axe-age and the sword-age dire, when shields shall cleave in twain,  
And Loki over Nifleheim with his wolf brood shall reign.

Then the god turned and struck the boor a fierce and crashing blow,—  
A buffet that would split an oak. Into the rolling flow  
Headlong he fell, and headlong sank ; then with swift strides the god  
Forded the whirling torrent, and once more dry land trod.







### **An Old Danish Ballad Re-sung.**

**T**HE princess she was a winsome thing,  
Only seventeen years that Spring.

She said to her love, "I fain would see  
Your pack of hounds loose on the lea.

"Saddle thy horse and gird thee, Brand,  
And we will ride to a happier land."

"Lady fair, I've no steed but one ;  
But thou shalt ride and I will run."

*AN OLD DANISH BALLAD RE-SUNG.*

"Earl Brand, my father has horses three :  
More than enough for you and me."

So away they galloped o'er moss and moor,  
And these lovers met neither rich nor poor.

They never slackened for sun nor rain,  
On the hill-side or over the plain.

Fox might bark, or wild hawk scream,  
Life with them was a Summer dream.

Till at last they met, at the side of a wood,  
With one who was evil and never good.

"Earl Brand," said the maiden, "if ye love me,  
Slay that traitor, or he'll slay thee."

"I cannot slay him, my lady fair,  
For bent is his back and grey his hair."

"Why, Sir Knight, in such haste to ride?  
And where have you stolen that bonny  
bride?"

"She is my sister, and not my wife,  
And I fear me much for the maiden's life."

"If she is weary and all but dead,  
Why does she wear that hood of red?"

"If she's been sick and like to die,  
Why do I gold and jewels spy?"

He ran back fast to her kith and kin,  
And beat at the door till they let him in.

"Now, where is the lady of this hall?"  
"Out at play with the cowslip ball."

"No!" he cried, "you are all mista'en :  
Go, count your maidens o'er again."

"I met her but now in headlong flight  
With young Earl Brand, the English knight."

Her father he mounted with fifteen men,  
And rode swift down the mountain glen.

The lady looks back, as the stream they  
ford,  
And cries, "Ride faster, or draw your  
sword."

"If they come on me one by one,  
You must stand by till the fight be done ;

"But if they charge on me one and all,  
You must stand by and see me fall."

Then one by one they on him ran,  
And fourteen times he slew his man :

Ten of the rascals dead by the burn,  
Four rogues stretched on the trampled fern.

The fifteenth traitor, stealing round,  
Gave him a deep and deadly wound.

The knight of his wound took little heed,  
But kissed his lady upon her steed.

They rode till they came to the brimming  
tide,  
And there he bound his bleeding side.

"O Earl, I see your red heart's blood!"  
"Tis but the gleam of your scarlet hood."

They rode till he came to his mother's  
door,  
Then he fell dead on the chamber floor.



## The Labours of Thor.

BEING A NORSE LEGEND FROM THE PROSE EDDA.

THE path to the giants' country  
Lies o'er a broad deep cliff-bound sea,  
Through forest and swamp, o'er fell and moor,  
And waste and barren, stony and poor ;  
None since the earliest days of yore  
Have crossed that sea, or stood on that shore,  
Yet Thor once by a magic clue  
Traversed it, seeking deeds to do.

\* \* \* \*

There was the city ; it stood on a plain  
Treeless and open to wind and rain.  
The walls rose up to meet the stars,  
Its gates were guarded with triple bars.  
Thor, he wrestled with beam and bolt,  
Gave many a twisting angry jolt,  
But in vain. So then, as a weasel creeps  
Between the stalks of the wheatsheaf heaps,  
He angrily slipped : how the wise god's  
thought  
All Loki's barriers set at nought !

He found the palace, 't was vast and high,  
With golden turrets that clove the sky,  
And seeing a door wide open stand,  
He entered, and lo ! the giant band  
Seated on benches around the hall,  
And Loki throned above them all.

They gravely bowed, but the king austere,  
Cried, frowning, "Who is this stripling  
here ?  
The warrior Thor ? let him merit his fame  
By doing some deed that is fitting his name."

Loki of Utgard, that wily king,  
Smiled at Thor's angry challenging,  
But he arose, and his giant race,  
And came to a broad and level place,

Then called to Hugi, one of his train,  
To race with Thor on that grassy plain.  
Tears of rage were in Thor's fierce eyes,  
He ran as fast as the swallow flies,  
But as the arrow the bird o'ertakes,  
Swifter than fire in the dry grass brakes,  
Hugi outran him and reached the place,  
Then turned and met Thor face to face.—  
"Bravely lost," cried Loki then,  
"But Hugi is fleeter than gods or men."

"Bring me a drinking-horn," cried Thor :  
"I challenge you giants, one or a score."  
Loki called for a walrus-horn,  
Thor looked at it with angry scorn.  
"Bold drinker," said Loki, "now drain that  
cup,  
In two good draughts you should toss it up.  
The veriest woman, it seems to me,  
Could quaff that goblet in two or three."

'T was a simple horn, long tapering,  
A mere poor unshaped rustic thing.  
The god was thirsty, and raised the horn  
To his eager lips with a savage scorn.  
A long deep draught he fiercely took,  
Never stopping to breathe nor look ;  
But still when he set the goblet down  
(And Loki smiled at his wrathful frown),  
The liquor was lessened never a whit ;  
Three draughts he took, but scarce a bit  
The cup was emptier : breathless, worn,  
Thor gave back the giant's horn.

"Now, fie !" quoth Loki, "no prize of mine  
Will to-day be clutched by those hands of  
thine."

"Try me again," quoth angry Thor,  
"Try me, ye giants, with one feat more ;



THE LABOURS OF THOR.

Though Utgard Loki may mock and laugh,  
That was a horn that no god could quaff."  
"Try him," cried Loki, with crafty eyes ;  
"Bring him that cat our children prize.  
Let us see you lift it, mighty Thor,  
Though scarce so strong as we held you  
for."  
While he spoke a large black cat sprang in,  
Whining, and purring, and struggling.

Thor took the cat in his cruel clasp,  
And clutched its fur with a tiger grasp.  
He strained, and grappled, and gnawed  
each limb,  
But that cat was still stronger far than him.

"Ha ! Thor," cried Loki, "'t is as I thought,  
Our cat is stalwart, and thou art nought."

"Little or big," said Thor, "I see  
None here who will dare wrestle with me  
Now I am wroth." Then Loki cried,  
"I see none here but could tame thy pride.  
Let somebody call that poor old crone,  
Elli, my nurse, she will quell thee alone."

A toothless hag, with bleared red eyes,  
Came hobbling in : she was old and bent,  
She stared at Thor with a feigned surprise,  
And lower upon her crutch she leant.  
Tighter Thor held her, firmer she stood,  
Strong as the oak-tree in the wood ;  
Then she twined and grappled him slowly  
down,  
Till at last, in spite of curse and frown,

He fell on one knee. Then the crone  
laughed out,  
And the hall-roof shook with the giants'  
shout.

The next day, Utgard Loki, elate,  
Led Thor out of the city gate.  
Baffled and chafed was mighty Thor,—  
Never had been so fooled before.

"Nay," said Loki, "then know 't was I  
Who baffled thy force with my subtlety.  
A cloud of magic was over thee thrown ;  
All those spells were mine alone.  
What wonder that thou wert set at nought  
By Hulgi our runner, for Hulgi was  
Thought !

No wonder that thou wert laughed to scorn  
For failing to drain that mighty horn,  
For its one end reached the bottomless sea,—  
A draught, O Thor, for even thee !  
Midgard Serpent that cat of ours  
Foiled thy rage and thy fiercest powers.  
Old Age that lean and crippled crone,  
By whom thou wert all but overthrown.  
Sooner or later she lays us low,  
Yes ! all of us fall beneath her blow.  
Now let us part, and I'm not loth :—  
Come not again, or 'twere worse for both ;  
But if thou dost, a spell shall fall  
That will hide from thee giants, city, and  
all."—

Thor waxed wroth, and seized his mace,  
But Loki had vanished, nor left a trace.  
When Thor strode back to storm the town,  
He only found a bare lone down.



## A Dorsetshire Legend.

### I.

THORKILL and Thorston from Jutland  
came

To torture us Saxons with sword and flame,  
To strip our homesteads and thorps and  
crofts,

To burn our barns and hovels and lofts,  
To fell our kine and slay our deer,  
To strip the orchard and drag the mere,  
To butcher our sheep and reap our corn,  
To fire our coverts of fern and thorn,  
Driving the wolves and boars in bands  
To raven and prey on our Saxon lands.—  
We had watched for their galleys day and  
night,

From sunrise until beacon-light ;  
But still the sea lay level and dead,  
And never a sail came round the Head.—  
We watched in vain till one Autumn day,  
When a woolly fog that northward lay  
Sullenly rose, and the broad grey sea  
Sparkled and danced in the full bright sun  
(The shadows were purple as they could be):  
Then stealing round by Worbarrow Bay,  
Past Lulworth Cove and the White Swyre  
Head,  
The black sails came, and every one  
When they saw the sight turned pale as the  
dead.

### II.

The black sails spread in a long curved line,  
Like a shoal of dog-fish, or rather of sharks,  
When, chasing the porpoise in the moonshine,  
They leave behind them a drift of sparks.  
Those coal-black sails bore slowly on,  
Past Kingsland Bay and Osmington,  
By the white cliff of Bindon Hill,  
Past Kimmeridge and Gad Cliff Mill ;—

Then with a bolder fiercer swoop  
Bore down the Danish robber troop,  
Skimming around St. Adhelm's Head,  
With its chantry chapel and its rocks  
Stained green and brown by tempest shocks,  
And its undercliff all moss and heather,  
And ivy cable and green fern feather,  
And steered straight on for Studland Bay,  
Where all our Saxon treasure lay.

### III.

Their sails, as black as a starless night,  
Came moving on with a sullen might ;  
Rows of gleaming shields there hung  
Over the gunwales, in order slung ;  
And the broad black banners fluttered and  
flapped  
Like raven's pinions, as dipped and lapped  
The Norsemen's galleys ; their axes shone.—  
Every Dane had a hauberk on,  
Glittering gold ; how each robber lord  
Waved in the air his threatening sword !—  
One long swift rush through serf and foam,  
And they leapt ere the rolling waves had gone,  
On our Saxon shore, their new-found home.  
With a clash of collars and targe and spear,  
With a laughing shout and a rolling cheer,  
Like wolf-hounds when the wolf's at bay  
Those bearded warriors leapt ashore—  
(If there was one there were forty score)—  
And dragged their galleys with fierce uproar  
To where our fishing-vessels lay :  
Who dare resist ? Woe worth the day !

### IV.

They drank our ale and stole our corn,  
And slew our sheep and burnt our ricks,  
And long, long, long before the morn,

*A DORSETSHIRE LEGEND.*



Had stormed our church, and spit on the Pyx,  
And filled the chalice and paten with blood  
Of monks they had hung to the Holy Rood.

*A DORSETSHIRE LEGEND.*

v.

Thorkill was old and worn and grey,  
The best of his years had passed away ;  
Grim and silent, he hated our race :—  
He'd sworn by Odin he would deface  
Every cross on our Saxon shore,  
And light the cliffs for fifty mile  
With fires to make the Norsemen smile.  
But Thorston his brother was fair and young,  
With chest like a bull, and knotty brow,  
Bold and frank, and merry and brave,  
Liking nothing so much as a blow,  
And no home like the tossing wave.  
A walrus-horn at his breast there hung,  
Great rings of gold and amber bound  
His wrists and ankles and neck around.

vi.

They seized our Bishop Witikind,  
And bound him while they drank to Thor,  
Who had brought them safe to the Saxon  
shore.  
The old man, patient, calm, resigned,  
His pale thin face all streaked with gore,  
Stood praying there, as they ate their feast  
And quaffed the mead and slew the beast.—  
He stood in his robes of cloth of gold,  
And jewelled mitre and brodered cope,  
And while the legend and tale they told,  
The helmsmen bound him with knotty rope ;  
And they scoffed, and mocked, and drank to  
him,  
Cursing his god ; and then they flung  
The logs from their bonfire ; limb by limb  
Maiming and bruising and torturing him,  
The while the abbey bells they rung,  
Till Thorkill threw him upon the board,  
And Thorston smote him with axe and sword.

vii.

Our women were hid in Wareham caves,  
There looking out on the sky and waves ;

They were praying for us, who, on the down,  
Were watching the flames of our burning  
town.

viii.

We trapped the sleeping wolves as they lay,  
Drunk with wine 'mid their spoil and prey ;  
Thorkill and Thorston with cords we bound,  
The others we lashed as one lashes a hound ;—  
'Their hands were red with our children's  
blood,  
Having slain a dozen in Peverel Wood.  
We led the rest out to the plashes,  
Down by the brook near the pollard ashes,  
Seating them there on a fallen tree,  
Ankles and knees tied fast with cord,  
A twist of oziars in each rogue's hair,  
As a grip for the hand, so that the sword  
Might sweep at the necks left white and fair.

ix.

There they sat, but not like felons,  
Or trembling like doves in the falcons' talons,  
But bold, erect, and with eyes keen bent,  
To see our Eldermen's intent.  
Caring no more for the blow of death  
Than a tough oak does for a passing breath.  
Thorkill and Thorston, stiff as stone,  
Stood bound to a neighbouring tree alone.

x.

The outermost man was first to die,  
Then we beheaded the next in turn,  
Throwing his head on a heap of fern  
Laid there to sop up the Danish blood,  
As you throw a dead dog carelessly  
When you've caught him poaching in a wood.  
As the headsman passed he severally  
Asked each in the row if he feared death.  
Third Dane, growling between his teeth,—  
"What befell my father must happen to me:  
Better to perish and gloriously  
Than live a felon and slave like thee."



*A DORSETSHIRE LEGEND.*

The fourth man said, "Be quick, I pray,  
For we've been guessing this very day  
Whether a headless man can feel ;  
Let me then grasp a knife in my hand,  
And if, when my head falls, I shall throw  
The knife in return for the coward blow,  
Then you Saxons will understand  
That I felt the pain. Strike quick, thou  
    slave,  
Come, settle the matter, you sturdy knave."  
The headsman lifted his axe and smote,  
But the knife dropped down on the gory  
    sand.  
"Aim at my face," the fifth man cried,  
"I will not flinch, for it is our pride  
In Jutland never to blench nor shrink,  
Mouth to quiver, nor eyelid wink."—  
The headsman smote him full in the teeth,  
And he dropt dead on the crimson heath.

XI.

Alfric paused when he saw but two  
Of all the Norsemen band remained.  
Thorkill and Thorston, they of the crew  
The proudest, though with fresh blood be-  
    stained.  
Thorston was still in the bloom of youth,  
Eyes all glowing with love and truth,  
Golden hair that fell clustering down  
Over his cheek of ruddy brown.  
"Do you fear death?" said one of our band,  
Swinging the axe in his threatening hand.  
"What is fear?" cried the stripling Dane.  
"But I pray thee let no serf strike me,  
Nor one whose hand these murders stain."

Then I, who had power to pardon and save,  
Came and said, "What if I spare thy life,  
Thou Jutland robber?" "Who is it asks?"  
He said, with bold eye glancing brave ;  
"We Danes know nothing of Saxon tasks.  
What must I pay to thee, Jarl?" he said.  
"Loose him," I cried, "and let him free."—  
Alfric, maddened to hear the Dane,  
He, who had slain the sturdiest men,—  
Ran with his heavy curtal axe,  
And said, "If the older rogue go free,  
Thorston at least shall pay the tax."  
But the young Dane threw him swiftly down,  
And Alfric falling, the binding cord  
Was in the struggle cut with a sword.  
Thorston his freedom quick regained,  
And with one blow was Alfric brained.  
Yet in a moment twenty or more  
Bound the Dane faster than before.  
Then I asked Thorston if he would deign,  
Being a noble Pirate and Thane,  
To grasp us with the hand of peace,  
And let all strife from that day cease.  
"Yea will I," bold the young man cried.  
"Gladly," cried Thorkill, "once for all,  
Friends on the wave, and friends in hall."  
"Undo the rope," I cried: 't was done,—  
And we were friends ere set of sun.  
Twice was the battle at Wareham won,  
For we found the old saw still run true,  
"Brave enemies make brave friends," they  
    say.  
Bertha, my sister, Thorston wed ;  
And when old Thorkill was one year dead,  
Thorston o'er Jutland's fiords blue  
And over the mainland had the sway.





### The Death of King Warwolf.

THE great King Warwolf waxing old,  
And feeling that death was nigh at hand,  
Resolved to die as a hero should—  
Not pent in a bed, and then hid in the  
sand;

So he clad him brave in his golden mail,  
And took his axe and his massiest shield,  
And his spear, and his bow, and his two-  
edged sword,  
That no one else but himself could wield.



And he bade them drag his galley forth,  
 And load it with trunks of the driest pine,  
 And store it with oak-butts knotty and ringed,  
 And pile it with fir-cones line on line.—  
 So they set the gold-cloth sails all fair,  
 And tied the well-worn helm due north,  
 And they bore him down on their brazen shields  
 To the barque that was destined to bear  
 him forth.

Sitting erect on his fir-tree throne,  
 In his royal robe and glittering crown,  
 As the fateful galley bore away  
 Slowly out of sight of the town,

Singing to Odin hymns of praise,—  
 Cheerily, though with a failing breath,  
 He went in splendour and bold of heart,  
 In a kingly way to meet King Death.

They watched till they saw the ship go down  
 Below the long grey line of sea ;  
 And then there arose a great red glare,  
 That seemed to crimson fitfully  
 The whole broad heaven, and melt the waves  
 Into one cauldron of blood-red light,  
 And soon all suddenly there fell  
 A pitchy gloom, and then came—NIGHT.

## The Two Norse Kings.

A YORKSHIRE BALLAD.

TWO galleys, each with crimson sail,  
Plough fast the green bath of the whale.

A fierce king stands on either prow,  
A gold band round his knotty brow.

A bronze axe and an ivory horn  
Are by each wroth king proudly borne.

A torque of twisted gold one wore—  
That brooch Jarls from the walrus tore.

The raven banner's flowing black,  
Their red prows cast a flaming track.

Clashing the gold links on his chest,  
Each bid his rowers do their best.

The Saxon land is fair and green—  
Broad meadows with a stream between.

Both galleys, with an equal beak,  
Touch at one bound the sandy peak.

Both Norse kings leap at once to land,  
Like sunbeams spring forth either brand.

Gonthron kneels down to kiss the earth,  
Bonthron laughs loud with cruel mirth.

Then helm meets helm, and shield meets  
shield,  
Red grows the sand, and red the field.

Gather, ye eagles, on the crag,  
Swarm, ravens, on each chalky jag.

Notched splints of steel and shreds of gold  
Are scattered on the Saxon mould.

Bright mail is cloven, flags are torn,  
Soon are the shouts to Odin borne.

But all the fight, this narrow verse  
May not, if it could, rehearse.

This I know,—a burial mound  
Rises o'er that battle-ground ;

And to this day the Saxon boor  
Calls it in legends "Bonthron's Moor."

## The Gibbet Tree.

OLAF and Guthren, abbot's thralls,  
Were hewing abbey wood ;  
Pine beams for chancel roof they sought,  
And oak beams for the rood.

Around them north and south there spread  
The cuckoo-flowers in bloom ;  
But overhead the raven croaked,  
Amid the pine-trees' gloom.

*THE GIBBET TREE.*



Blue miles of drooping hyacinths  
Spread where the saplings grew ;  
But still the raven boded ill,  
Above them out of view.

*THE GIBBET TREE.*

The violets long had passed away ;  
But where the axes rang—  
All in between the hazel stems—  
The speckled orchis sprang.

The wild deer eyed them down the dell ;  
Down from the great beech-tree  
The climbing squirrel turned to look,  
And watched them silently.

The sunshine, barred with shadow-firs,  
Cast gleams across the dell ;  
The thrushes piped and fluted  
Where'er the sunbeams fell.

Woodpeckers ceased no measured toil,  
Hearing the woodmen's tread ;  
No merry blackbird hushed his song ;  
No echoing cuckoo fled.

With axes glittering keen and bright,  
Amid the fir-trees' line,  
With song and psalm and gibe and curse,  
They hewed a stately pine.

In splashing showers the splinters flew  
Around them as they wrought :  
Deep in the centre of the glade  
They'd found the tree they sought :—

A giant mainmast—massy, huge,  
All jagged with broken spars,  
With lessening ledges of close boughs,  
Impierceable by stars.

They clove it slowly, gash by gash,  
With ever-hungry steel ;  
Slowly before their stalwart arms  
The tree began to reel.

“Who knows,” quoth Olaf, laughing-eyed,  
“This tree that soon will fall  
May prove a gibbet for some wretch  
To swing and scare us all?”

Then Guthren laughed, and bit his beard,  
And said, “Why, Olaf, man,  
We hew the beams for an organ-loft  
And for a shaven clan.”

Just then, beneath the heaving roots,  
They saw a brazen urn,  
Brimming with coined Roman gold,  
That made their wild eyes burn.

They ran to it, they fought for it,  
They grappled in their pride ;—  
Till wild beast Guthren drove his knife  
Into fierce Olaf's side.

On that day week the raven sat  
Above the fir-trees' line,  
And croaked, his prophecies fulfilled,  
Upon the gibbet pine.

Above the spot that still was red  
With murdered Olaf's blood  
Swung Guthren—he, the abbot's thrall,  
Who'd hewed the gibbet wood.



## The Hammermen of Old.

MIMER, the hammerman—strong of arm, brawny of limb, and rugged of brow,  
Stalwart to forge the Norsemen's steel, the sword, the spear, but never the plough—  
Had, after years of care and thought, of heat, and sweat, and grappling pain,  
Beat out a suit of close-linked mail to guard King Siegfried's heart and brain.

Massive it was and firmly knit, a horse's load at least,  
Fit to resist the Saxon axe, and the fang and claw of beast ;  
Against it spears were bulrushes, and arrows but oat-straws ;  
'Twas made for men who mocked at swords, and cared not for the laws.

Mimer laughed loud, in pride and scorn, as he gazed at his task,  
And in the sun, a clashing heap, he threw it down to bask ;  
Then stretched himself beside his door, to sing (he cared for nought) :  
Just then Æmilius wandered by absorbed in gloomy thought.

"Behold my work," rough Mimer roared : "it is for Odin fit ;  
No sword, e'en by a mine-dwarf made, could dint its links one whit."  
"I'll weld a blade," Æmilius said, "that shall shear through this steel,  
And cleave the braggart wearing it from helmet down to heel."

"Go, beat away," rough Mimer cried, wrath rising in his gorge :  
"We care not what you village smiths upon your stithies forge."  
So saying, he arose and smote an anvil clean in twain,  
And dashed the fire out with his foot, then dashed it in again.

Silent, but wroth, Æmilius passed, his face hid in his hood,  
Striding through thorns and hemlocks tall, to where his black forge stood ;  
Then fanned his sleeping charcoal fires, and dragged his anvil forth,  
And sorted out his choicest ore from the far-frozen North.

It was a lonely forest dell, walled in with fir-trees dark,  
Paved with dead leaves and resinous cones, but lit by no star-spark ;  
The black bear's growl, the badger's cry, were the only sounds to cheer ;  
The squirrel gambolled overhead : no woodman's hut was near.

Three moons had passed away and gone, when to the king in state,  
Æmilius brought the potent sword : glad was he and elate.  
'Twas smoky blue, nor polished yet, but fit for gods to wield ;  
He brought it with a warrior's pride, beating it on his shield.

## THE HAMMERMEN OF OLD.

A woollen thread that floated by upon the river's tide  
He severed with a keen-drawn stroke, laughing aloud in pride.  
Then, without courtesy or sign, strode off unto his den :  
He was the churliest of the brood of mighty hammermen.

'Mid crimson blaze and yellow gleams, and sharp keen-darting spires,  
Amid the brightness and the gloom of never-quenchéd fires,  
He beat and hammered, filed and ground, still tempering the blade,—  
The night wolves, baying, fled away from that re-echoing glade.

He sawed the trusty steel to shreds, and welded the fine ore ;  
He tempered it in ice and milk, and bear's and fox's gore ;  
Laid it in nests of scarlet coals, and in the golden blaze,  
And smote it on his ringing forge for two and twenty days.

Then with its razor's fine "fire-edge" he severed at a blow  
A bale of wool that floated white on the thawed water's flow ;  
But, still unsatisfied, he strode back to his murky den,  
More steadfast at his chosen art than all the hammermen.

Ten months he toiled amid the blaze of those loud-roaring fires,  
Amid the flames that round him leaped with their keen wavering spires ;  
He then went forth, and with his blade a floating pack of wool  
Carved clean in twain and at one stroke. His work was ripe and full.

Æmilius long ago had learned that in all worthy art  
Patience and Wisdom must combine each in its several part :  
Either away, the craftsman's work remained mere wood or stone,  
And that wise Patience is to art as flesh is to our bone.

Now, then, at last the perfect sword he hid beneath his cloak,  
And went to where the king and court, and all the warrior folk,  
Had gathered, praising Mimer ; then, with a stealthy smile,  
Æmilius bade him meet the test, and this he said in guile.

King Siegfried sat upon a throne carved out of ivory ;  
The lords and ladies round him grouped, a goodly sight to see ;  
On their rich robes the emerald stones shone with eternal Spring,  
Round cloth of gold the belts of gems were proudly glistening.

Mimer, in mail undinted, scoffed, standing erect and proud,  
Impatient for the trial blow : "Strike hard !" he cried aloud.  
While he yet spoke the giant sword flew like a windmill round,  
And smote him, keen and rude and fierce, and felled him to the ground.



*THE WILTSHIRE CAIRN.*

"Unhurt!" cried Mimer, "yet I feel a creeping kind of cold,  
From brain to heart, from head to foot, stealing from fold to fold."  
"Then shake thyself!"—Æmilias cried, with a sour sturdy laugh;  
And lo! the bleeding hammerman fell cloven fair in half!

Never to swing his hammer more, at stithy or in mine,  
In ponderous shirt of pliant steel no more to strut or shine;  
Split like a beechen log, he fell at great King Siegfried's feet,  
To sullen, bragging hammermen, a warning very meet.

*The Wiltshire Cairn.*

CARADOC with the golden torque,  
Amber anklets and sword of bronze,  
A wolf-skin clothing his giant limbs,  
Tawny with thirty Summers' suns,  
Was slain beneath those great beech-trees  
By Roman spearmen, who had found  
His last retreat, and burnt his hut,  
And dragged his wife in fetters bound.

Now see the mound, that scarcely swells  
Above the level of the downs,  
Upon whose summit, dry and sear,  
Ground-thistles spread their purple crowns;  
While round it nets the dry crisp thyme  
The bees love so: those old trees wave  
Just where the Roman spearmen struck,  
And Caradoc had here his grave.

'Twas fourteen hundred years ago;  
And now the thrush upon the thorn  
Sings heedless of that chieftain's fate;  
And on this golden July morn,  
A little butterfly, all blue,  
In the mid air is hovering  
Around the flowering grass that grows  
Above the ashes of the king.

And far away the corn-fields stretch  
In golden sections, fading dim,  
To the grey ridge of farther down;  
That burring murmur is the hymn  
Of the great conqueror Steam, the chief  
Of new reformers. See that whiff  
Of flying smoke—that is the train;  
Fast burrowing in the tunnelled cliff.



## The Horseman's Serf.

### I.

"SING me a song that will make me young,"  
Cried the Dane to the captive boy,  
"A song that will stir my blood like wine."  
So he sung of peace and joy;  
But every Dane, with a frown of scorn,  
Clashed on his target and blew his horn.

### II.

Then, to soothe those hard and wolfish hearts,  
He sung them a lullaby,  
A rocking tune that mothers croon  
To the children upon their knee;  
Still they would not listen, the thievish horde,  
But beat their knives on the oaken board.

### III.

"We want a song of youth and love."  
Then he struck his harp with might,  
And sang of the eyes that had shot their fire  
Into his breast that night.  
Till the old king kissed the ring he wore,  
And cried, "My kingdom for her once more!"

### IV.

They said, "Chant now of the Saxon shore."  
So he sang of those long white walls,  
Where the broad surf seethes and the breakers leap,  
And the galley rises and falls.  
Then they roared, "Launch out!" and their axes rose  
And beat together the wild tune's close.

### V.

"Give us a seaman's stave!" cried they.  
So he sang of the steady gale,  
That fills with a full and constant breath  
The straining galley's sail,  
And drives, come daylight or come dark,  
To the Saxon shore, the Danish bark.

## THE DYING VIKING.

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### VI.

And he told of the green surge under the cliffs,  
And the white wave spitting foam  
O'er the jagged snout of the "Shark-tooth" reef,  
Not a mile from his Cornish home.  
Then every Viking cried, "To sea!"  
Hearing that song of pride and glee.

### VII.

"Give us a battle-cry!" they shout.  
And he blew them a trumpet blast,  
Like the shrill night shriek from a burning town,  
That makes the wolf aghast.  
Then they cried, "Away!" and the galleys sprang  
To the waves' embrace, as the captive sang.

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## The Dying Viking.

### I.

"BRING me my armour, Sigurd,  
I'll die as my fathers died,  
Not like a wolf in a shepherd's trap,  
But in all a warrior's pride.  
Strike on the brazen targets,  
And let our clarions ring;  
I'll meet this Death they talk of,  
As a King should meet a King.

### II.

"Olaf, take you my vessels  
With the dark and threatening sails,  
Go forth and scare the Saxon,  
Harry his fertile vales;  
Dye helm and hauberk crimson,  
Ply well the sword and torch;  
Go, brain the Murcian bishops  
In their shattered temple-porch.

### III.

"And thou, my bowman, Harold,  
Be thine to plunder France;  
Smite with the axe and hammer  
At the vine-grower's lance.  
Sack churches, fire the homesteads,  
Turn red the muddy Seine;  
Burn standing corn and orchard,  
Make barren every plain.

### IV.

"Ye are my raven-feeders,  
Ye are my warrior brood,  
Be yours to give the falcons  
The cravens for their food.  
But, Oscar, thou my youngest,  
Thou hast thy mother's face,  
Be thine to guard the peasants,  
And found a peaceful race.



v.

“Thou shalt bring home some maiden,  
With eyes like violet flowers  
When they spring up sweeter, fresher,  
After the sunny showers.

You'll let the pine-woods dwindle  
Around our fortress hill,  
And corn in golden billows  
Gird many a freeman's mill.

*A LEGEND OF THE RED SEA.*

VI.

"But quick,—my heart beats slower,  
Life's sand is running fast ;  
Out with a thousand galleys—  
I hear the quickening blast—

One hour, and in Luffoden  
Our walrus-horns shall ring,  
For I'll meet this Death they talk of,  
As a King should meet a King."

*A Legend of the Red Sea.*

"The Genii's blessings (which are curses) descended upon him."—*Arab Proverb.*

HALF starved, the Arab Abib stands,  
Upon the Red Sea's burning sands,  
Beating his breast with bleeding hands.

A poor and half-starved fisherman,  
The deep dark wave he tries to scan,  
Vainly, as but the hopeless can.

The coral spikes had torn his net,  
That all the night in vain was set,  
His flimsy boat was leaky wet.

The sun's hot shafts had through him thrust,  
His hooks the night-dews blunt and rust,—  
In God the Arab has no trust.

He sees no angel on the hills,  
With eyes that deepest pity fills  
For human griefs and human ills.

Snapping his oars upon his knee,  
He curses the poor locust-tree,  
That sheds its fruit so lavishly.

He turned, and lo ! a quick star fell  
From where the black-eyed houris dwell  
(What men think Heaven is often Hell).

It dropped—and as it touched the earth,  
It broke to diamond-dust ; with mirth  
Of mocking voices came the birth.

A giant Afrit, wicked, proud,  
Half fire (but fire that's hid in cloud),  
Arose, and Abib shrieked aloud.

"Thou foolish child of clay," it said,  
"We Genii mourn not for the dead.  
I am your god where'er I tread !

"There is no ruler of this world,  
He from his throne has long been hurled,  
His sun-cloud banner long since furled.

"The God you seek is but a thing  
Of mad fool's trances—a dream-king,  
A God without a brain or wing.

*A LEGEND OF THE RED SEA.*

"What need of pining?—there is gold,  
More than thy crazy bark can hold,  
In this dark sea—if thou art bold.

"Fools only kneel : stand on thy feet,  
The world beneath thee tramp and beat ;  
Dominion to the wise is sweet.

"Let down thy net before the sun  
His useless circle hath outrun.  
Thy insect life is but begun."

A mist arose out of the sea :  
"My Simoom horse has come for me,"  
The Genii cried : "be rich and free."

The fire-wind came and swept the sand,  
And demons, an exulting band,  
Rode with it to the desert land.

\* \* \* \*

Abib awakes from out his trance ;  
The moonbeams on the waters dance,  
The quick waves meeting, flash and glance.

Without a prayer his net he threw,  
The ropes in a wide circle flew,  
And slowly settled sure and true.

He drags, and lo ! a toiling weight,  
A burden ponderous and great,  
Then glimmers of a golden freight.

A dead man's hair mats in the strings,  
A golden robe that laps and clings,  
A blazing crown with emerald rings.

A chain with jewelled beetles strung,  
A massy golden targe that rung,  
Still to the Pharaoh's body hung.

A frown is on the dead king's face,  
His lips are pressed in stern grimace,  
One hand is on his quiver-case.

And on his ring a jewel, see  
"Pharaoh, the son of Isis—he  
Who rules both Egypts—kneel to me."

Now Abib to his hut returns,  
The signet on his turban burns,  
"Yes ! this is what God's chosen earns."

They crown him Lord—he spurns the priest,  
Drives pilgrims from the holy East,  
And slays the Christians at their feast.

The Arab rebels crown him king,  
His mandates fly on tireless wing,  
And make the desert echoes ring.

The Genii's curse is on his head,  
The desert, wheresoe'er he tread,  
With human blood is crimson red.

Soon cohorts come and fire the town,  
And Abib, with his head hung down,  
Upon a cross now wears the crown.



## The Death of Rufus.

IN the White City's palace  
 Sat Rufus at the board,  
 And many an abbot round him,  
 And many a Norman lord.

The dark-red wine of Malvoisin  
 Flew fast amid the glee,  
 While the brutal laugh of Rufus  
 Rang o'er the revelry.

No need of torch in banquet hall,  
 For the sun was bright on high,  
 Like the blessed angels' dwelling-place  
 It glowed in yonder sky.

At St. Swithin's shrine,\* the shaven priest  
 A holy Mass has said,  
 A Mass for the buried Saxon prince,  
 A Mass for the royal dead.

Ah! little recked that savage king,  
 While the jest he shouted loud,  
 Of him who wore the Conqueror's crown,  
 Of battle or of shroud.

A white-robed monk rushed swiftly in;  
 Wild was his frenzied air;  
 Though his brain seemed seared by vision,  
 His hands were clasped in prayer.

On the tyrant's lip the mock of scorn  
 Died in a curse away,  
 As he stamped his foot and shouted,  
 "What would the driveller say?"

"Hear, monarch!" said the prophet:  
 "Beware thee of the chase;  
 I saw a blood-red comet  
 Hang o'er a blasted place.

"God's wrath is on thy cruel sport;  
 Outstretchéd is His hand,  
 His flaming sword He quivers  
 O'er a black and guilty land."

Silent the king in wonder  
 Gazed at the monk who spoke;  
 No voice of idle mocker  
 The solemn silence broke.

"I saw thee come in vision  
 Into St. Swithin's shrine,  
 Crowned as for fight or banquet,  
 With that haughty mien of thine.

"I saw thee like the were-wolf, King;  
 Seize on the relics there,  
 And with thy teeth" (stern Rufus smiled)  
 "The sainted treasure tear.

"And then a blow from unseen hand  
 Dashed thee into a tomb, [up,  
 And smoke and flame from the vault came  
 Till the stars were hid in gloom."

"Is this thy dream, thou dotard?"  
 Wild laughter shook the hall:  
 "A tale to please a holy nun;  
 Go, paint it on thy wall.

"A health!" he said, and gave the bowl  
 To him who sat him next.  
 "Waes hael! to the fat monk's treasures  
 Hid 'neath a rugged vest.

"Why silent?" quoth the monarch:  
 "I only love the bold.  
 'Tis but a monk, a drivelling priest,  
 Who sells his dreams for gold.

\* The cathedral at Winchester was dedicated to this saint.

THE DEATH OF RUFUS.

"Give the fool a hundred shillings."—

He dashed them down in scorn.

"Thy soul will need some Masses  
Before the morrow morn."

"A sturdy knave," grim Rufus cried.

"Fill up another bowl ;

I'll never starve the body

In hopes to save the soul.

"Let women pore o'er painted books,

And tremble at a dream ;

Who mates with monks and shaven fools,

A coward knave I deem.

"Let Robert, in a land of fire,

A beggared hermit roam,

While I with hound and falcon

Hunt in my royal home.

"Go, bid the vassals saddle

The steed at Mons I rode ;

By the holy cross at Lucca,\*

'T is the best I e'er bestrode.

"I love the chase, 't is mimic war,

And the hollow bay of hound ;

The heart of Norman chieftain

Beats quicker at the sound."

"Go not, my liege," said Tyrrel.

"Already in yon bay,

The bands all bound for Poictou

For thee, their monarch, stay."

"Prate not of dreams," said Rufus—

And a savage oath he swore—

"Though yon woods were full of devils,

I'd hunt me there the boar."

\* \* \* \*

Forth, as the sun is setting,

Rides the gay cavalcade,

By many a ruin'd village,

Through many a tangled glade.

The wood in the calm fair sunset

Blazed with a fiery light,

O'er ruined church and hamlet

Came slowly on the night.

Fair as the last sad parting

The sun will take of earth,

All silent rode the hunters,—

It seemed no place for mirth.

Deep lay the giant shadows,

Dark, dark, on every side,

Like a countless host of spirits

Stood the forest spreading wide.

High o'er the rest, like monarchs,

The oaks, hoar monsters, stood.

No eye may pierce the stillness,

The blackness of the wood.

Like the roof of some great temple

Their old moss'd boughs were spread,

Scarce could the sun's last glory

Stream through the shade o'erhead.

A deer burst forth in panic

At the savage laugh and song.

Hounds from the leash are parted,

The hunters sweep along.

In a forest glade stands Rufus,

Intent on sylvan prize ;

From the parting rays of sunlight

The monarch veils his eyes.

"Shoot, Tyrrel, shoot !" he thunders :

Swift came the glancing dart ;

It has pierced the crown'd hunter,

It quivers in his heart.

\* \* \* \*

To the gate of the fair White City

Comes the charcoal burner's wain ;

It brings no hart for abbot's board,

It bears the royal slain.

\* The favourite oath of Rufus.





At fall of eve, the holy Mass  
 Chants the monk at St. Swithin's shrine :  
 "Great God !" the dreamer mutters,  
 "Thine is the vengeance, Thine."

## The Dedication of the Cathedral.

TEMP. 1401.

WILLIAM OF WYKEHAM (*moribundus*) loquitur.

SLOW from the basement, measured stone by stone,  
 Slow as the rings of rind around an oak,  
 Has grown this building dedicate to God,  
 Until at last the gilt star of the vane  
 Gleams in mid-air, and seems to crown the whole  
 As with a royal seal. Father of Light,  
 Mercy, and Love, accept this offering,  
 Poor earthly tabernacle, miserable type  
 Of heavenly mansions,—opal, chrysopras,  
 Jacinth, and emerald,—soon by Eden's gate  
 To meet my gaze, but in His own good time.

*THE DEDICATION OF THE CATHEDRAL.*

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Then let the hand of marble effigy  
Hold on my tomb the Founder's carved shrine,  
To show this long and patient work of mine  
That's now accomplished. Thunder, tamed to breathe  
Forth angels' music, shake the vaulted choir,  
Till the great pillars vibrate ; harmonies  
Soar to the poised roof—yes, soar and float,  
And bring me foretastes of the heaven beyond.

Saints, keep me humble—for this human heart  
Is a mere nest of pride, ambition, greed—  
Until the SPIRIT come, the Shekinah,  
And dwell within, and claim it all for GOD.—  
Better than trampled vines and shattered mills,  
Won by the red-stained lance, to see this house  
Raised to GOD's glory and His ceaseless praise.—  
Races may come and go, and kings be born,  
Or slain in battle ; statesmen shape the world  
Unto fresh issues ; still men's prayers shall rise  
From this my building night and day for aye.—  
See the great windows, like the jewelled gates  
Of Paradise, burning with harmless fire !  
Forests of stone, ye columns, spring in joy,  
And bear your holy burden ; round ye twine  
The wayside flowers, types of GOD's gracious love,  
Sent for their beauty only, to cheer man.

Grant me, ye saints, one prayer—only one prayer—  
That when the cardinals in crimson train,  
The mitred bishops, and the acolytes,  
The censer-swingers and the pale meek monks,  
Enter the western door, and welcoming hymns  
Break forth like birds in Spring, and every face  
Turns where the tapers and the banners come,  
I may repeat the song of Simeon,  
And pass at once as in a summer dream ;  
My GOD and SAVIOUR, so I die of joy,  
And pass rejoicing to my heavenly home,  
Soothed by the thought that in a whirlwind age,  
Mid clash of swords and flights of crossbow bolts  
And darkening arrows, I have helped to bring  
Thoughts of a purer, nobler life to some,  
And reared a refuge for Faith, Hope, and Love.



## The Legend of the Prince's Plume.

*A STORY OF THE BATTLE OF CRESSY, FROM FROISSART.*

1.

WHITE clung the sparkling frost to the long dry weeds in the hedges,  
The bramble's crimsoning leaf was crusted and curded with silver ;  
White nets of sparkling thread, the cobwebs, hung on the bushes,  
Where spiders, frozen and dead, were swaying like felons in fetters ;  
Heavy and frozen the folds hung from the slumbering banners ;  
Muffled, and solemn, and low, came the sound of the sentinels' voices.

The old blind King on the hill stood, and the hum of the nations  
Rose, and, filling the air, gladdened the heart of the monarch ;  
Armed, and wearing a crown, his long hair flowing and snowy,  
Mixed with his beard as it fell on the steel and gold of his armour ;

## THE LEGEND OF THE PRINCE'S PLUME.

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His thin hands leant on a sword that had shone in many a battle,  
Sceptre and prop of a realm guarded from Mahomet's children ;  
His helm was crested with plumes, spoils of the birds of the desert,  
A triple white feather and crest glittered high over his visor.  
At his feet knelt, praying, his son, armed and prepared for the saddle ;  
His charger, pawing the ground, neighed by the open pavilion,  
Ardent as hound for the chase, eager to leap on the lances.  
The king spake never a word, but lifted his eyes unto heaven,  
And his tears fell trickling fast as he muttered a prayer and a blessing ;  
But the lad, impatient and hot, vaulted at once on his charger,  
And cried to the banners, "Advance, in the name of the Prince of Bohemia !"   
Then, with a flourish of horns and a burst of chivalrous music,  
The knights swept eagerly on, and bore down the slope of the valley,  
With ruffle of pennon and flag, and a tossing of threatening lances,  
Then the blind king fell to the ground, and prayed with passionate weeping,  
Blessing both banner and crest, in the name of St. James the Apostle,  
The patron saint of his son, the saint of the land of Bohemia.

### II.

Then the Bishop of Avignon came, and knelt at the feet of the champion,  
Prayed him to tarry awhile, and not to lead yet to the battle.  
"Strike at the English, the knaves !" cried the proud prince, smiling in anger ;  
"This day," said the heir to the throne, "we must win honour or perish."  
Taking the flag in his hand, he swore to lead on with the foremost.—  
Close, and deadly, and thick shot the threatening ranks of the archers,  
Drawing together their shafts, equal in skill and in courage.—  
As the prince rode leisurely on, deep through the flood of the battle,  
Stripes of crimson and white adorned his numberless trappings :  
"These are womanly things !" cried the brave young prince of Bohemia ;  
"Away with this gilding and fur, this tinsel unstained by the battle—  
These chains of jewels and gold, mere marks for the shafts of an archer !  
Kings in the days of romance wore rude steel forged with the hammer,  
Close-fitting hauberk with links defying the Mussulman's sabres ;  
My father's is beaten and bruised, and split with Carpathian arrows,  
Crimson with blood from the heart of Paynims, slain in the *mélée* ;  
This badge I wear on my shield was won in the fray with the heathen.  
These plumes of an ostrich were torn from the brow of an infidel Soldan,  
To-day they shall glimmer afar o'er the tempest and roar of the onset.—  
Leave women ermine and fur, soft mantles satin and silken ;  
Give me a clothing of steel, and adamant dug from the mountain,  
Steel that may laugh at the swords and splinter the lances of iron,  
Deriding even the stones from the catapults groaning and shrieking."  
So said the prince as he mounted and rode down the hill to the battle :

### THE LEGEND OF THE PRINCE'S PLUME.

You have read of the knights of romance—Perceforest, Tristram, and Arthur,  
The giant whose mantle was trimmed with the beards of the kings he had vanquished,  
Launcelot, Knight of the Lake, and Percival, slayer of dragons  
Yet these, though noble and rich, were clad like labouring peasants  
Compared to the barons and earls who encircled the Prince of Bohemia.—  
Gabriel Count of Bayonne cried, "To-day will be saddest of any,  
Knights of Cyprus and Crete, if we beat not these English in battle."

\* \* \* \* \*

Many the valorous deed as the axes shivered the lances,  
As helms flashed sparkles of fire like the anvil under the hammer;  
Flights of arrows and bolts flew thick as the swallows in Autumn,  
'Gainst the puissant monarch's array, 'gainst the horses blazoned and barded.  
All the cross-bowmen of France led on the chosen battalion,  
Close as the hairs of a brush were the numberless heads of the lances,  
And through them, like roar of the beasts heard by night in a tropical forest,  
Came cries of "St. Dennis for France!" "St. Dennis for France and the Lilies!"  
As the sun, breaking out of a cloud, shone on the swords and the armour.  
While the trumpets were sounding, and rang with a merry and chivalrous cadence,  
From the sky came flying a dove and perched on the staff of a banner;  
Then they knew they were favoured of God, and clamoured, and all moved together.  
"Advance!" loud shouted the prince, "and bear down these ravening robbers.  
Chandos, and Talbot, and Scrope, guards the dark clusters of archers;  
The Duke of Athens is down, swept off by the hurrying eddies,  
And under an oak in a lane lies stretched Sir Reginald D'Artois."  
Then, making the sign of the cross, and raising his eyes unto heaven,  
"Now is the season for death," cried the prince, and spurred to the rescue;  
"Neville and Darcy and Scrope are hemming us in with their horses;  
Strike, for the glory of God, strike, for the flag of St. Dennis!  
Make us a way through the press, or die in the gap we have cloven;  
As is the usage of knights we will dig out a grave with our axes.  
Now, by St. Anthony's head, to the death of a knight or to conquest!"  
Then the prince leaped again on his steed, and hurled in the thick of the battle.

### III.

But a traitor and villanous spy ran to the King of Bohemia,  
Tears in his treacherous eyes, and knelt at the feet of the monarch.  
"What tidings, Sir Knight, of my son? I fear he is slain in the mêlée?"  
"Alas!" said the traitor, "he's fled by the highway leading to Paris,  
Leaving his barons and flag to the care of his squires and his yeomen."

*THE LEGEND OF THE PRINCE'S PLUME.*

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"Nay, then," the monarch replied, "it is fit I should fall in this battle,  
Not caring an hour to survive this shame and this stain on my honour."  
As he spoke rolled down on his beard hot tears of anger and sorrow.  
"I will carry my banner to death through ranks of the insolent foemen ;  
Ah ! as GOD is my help, I will never return from the battle,  
By Him who, weeping for us, died on the tree like a felon.  
Let us break the van of these slaves. Advance, Sir Knight, with my banner.—  
Ye all are my vassals and friends," cried the king, as he smothered his sorrow ;  
"Ye will not refuse the request of an old man weary and broken :  
I fain would strike with my sword, if only one blow, in this contest ;  
'Tis better to fall in the field than to die with one's head on the pillow.  
Tie my steed's bridle to yours, and lead me first with my banner."  
Then two of the stalwartest knights tied their three bridles together,  
And slow, and silent, and sad they rode down the hill to the valley.

IV.

"My son, any tidings of him?" said the king, as an archer came running,  
And fell at the feet of his prince, wounded and feathered with arrows.  
"How goes the battle below—where is my son and his horsemen?"—  
"Ha ! by St. Ives and St. Giles, and the crown of our Lady in heaven,  
Schwartzhof and Hoffmann are dead, and half the stout troopers of Binzlau."—  
"And my son?" "By the road that turns hard by the neighbouring valley,  
I saw him lopping his lance four feet from the wood of the handle,  
Doffing the spurs from his heels, and standing at bay 'mong the hunters ;  
His eyes half hid by the plumes that covered his brow and his forehead ;  
He had stripped his trappings and gems, his helm was dented and cloven,  
His sword was clotted and dark, and dark was his visor and armour,  
His red beard tangled and long fell on his breast and his shoulders ;  
His right hand wielding an axe, was cleaving a road through the archers ;  
Mowing a path to the tents ; he trampled the dead and the dying,—  
Seeing my armour and badge he waved me a proud salutation.—  
So through flights of great stones, 'mid the terrible roar of the engines,  
Through thrustings of lances and blades, and sweepings of two-handed falchions,  
Through cleavings of gorgets and shields and clouds of gathering banners,  
Through shriekings, groanings, and cries, and curses, and moanings to Heaven,  
I came to render thee aid, loving thee chiefest of any."—  
"Go," said the monarch, and sighed. "Thou hast home and a child to inherit.  
My son is no traitor, thank GOD ! but died in the heart of the onslaught ;  
I am now childless and old, and life is to me but a burden :  
Go tell the monarch of France how the chief of Bohemia perished."  
Then slow and silent and sad the old blind king and his courtiers  
Bound all their bridles together and rode down into the battle.

## THE GREAT WEST WINDOW.

### v.

Deep under mountains of dead, gashed, and smitten, and trampled,  
The heralds searching the field, counting the banners and scutcheons,  
Found the corpse of the son pierced with arrows and lances ;  
Above him the old man lay, the old blind King of Bohemia,  
One arm round the neck of the youth and one on a gash in his forehead.  
The Black Prince pausing to watch the heralds seeking the banners,  
Bent, and plucking the crest, the three white plumes of the ostrich,  
Placed them, spotted with blood, in the battered peak of his helmet.



## The Great West Window.

AN OLD CATHEDRAL LEGEND.

THE great west window was framed and  
done ;  
How proud was its painter, Father John !  
The watchings by night at the furnace door,  
The long days' ponderings, all were o'er ;  
The fires were quenched, and the fluxes and  
paints, [saints  
The tracings of monarchs, and prophets, and  
Were rolled and labelled, and hidden away,

And life for Friar John was all holiday ;  
His brushes were thrown in the nettly croft,  
And so was the palette he'd used so oft.  
But when he saw that shining rood  
Glow like sunset seen through a wood,  
There rose in his soul a wicked pride,  
And his heart beat quick with a fuller tide,  
Nor thought Friar John, as his work he eyed,  
If God in that work was glorified.

*THE GREAT WEST WINDOW.*

The window was a wondrous thing,  
Blooming with an eternal spring  
Of jewel colours and precious dyes,  
Deep and rich as the western skies

At summer sunsets, and hues of flowers  
That start up purple after the showers—  
The rose's crimson and iris bloom ;  
Sunny lustres and topaz gloom,



Such as the depths of the forest hide ;  
Lapis-sapphire for martyr's robe ;  
Scarlet for Herod's fiery pride ;  
Ruby for Michael's flaming sword ;  
Golden splendour for crown and globe  
Of David, the chosen of the LORD ;  
Amethyst, emerald, peacock's dyes,

Encircling a pale sad face,  
A glory lighting it shed from skies  
That shone like God's own dwelling-place :  
And all these burned and melted so,  
That there was within a kingly glow,  
A pulse of light, a life-blood flowing,  
Its varied colours ever showing.



*THE MONK AND THE WATER SPIRIT.*

What wonder, then, that as John gazed,  
As in a mirror, he saw upraised  
The veil that hides the spirit world,  
And the dim curtain slowly furled,  
Showing behind that crystal wall,  
Fiends that danced and mocked at his fall,  
Wild monsters beaked, and fanged, and  
    horned,  
Goblins that him and his glass saints scorned,  
And sneering Satan above them all.  
But Friar John prayed full loud and long,

And chanted many a holy song,  
And read his vesper service through,  
Ave and Pater not a few,  
Till heaven opened, and angel and saint  
Came to comfort that sinner faint  
With prayer and promise ; and now again,  
With purer eye and calmer brain,  
He looked, and through the coloured screen  
That parted earth from heaven's serene,  
He saw, through flushes of rainbow dyes,  
The opening gates of Paradise.

*The Monk and the Water Spirit.*

'T IS Paschal tide, and the soft winds blow  
From hawthorn branches drifts of snow,  
Driving the bees in a cluster forth,  
As the loud wild breath of the wintry North  
Scares the rooks with its warning shout,  
When it tosses the nests in the elms about ;  
And the tree, a prey to the rude storm's teeth,  
Falls and crushes the kine beneath ;  
And the rough blast down the chimney bore,  
Startles dull sleep with its muffled roar.

Like little barks the bees flew out,  
And sailed through the flower-stalks round  
    about ;  
While some steer back to their secret hold,  
Laden deep with the liquid gold ;  
Up in the vaulted blue so high  
Sings the lone hermit of the sky ;  
And like the nuns that heed not Spring,  
Their ceaseless psalms the throstles sing ;  
The sparrow, that 'mid the long grass feeds,  
Shakes from the blade the dewy beads.

Slow pacing through the forest cloister,  
Came a lone monk, chanting a Paternoster ;

His rosary hung from his long thin arm,  
He wore a crown of the faded palm ;  
The moss was soft to his sandalled feet,  
As seraph's breath the flowers smelt sweet.  
Hollow and worn, and meagre and wan,  
Was the sunken face of that childless man.  
He saw the young birds 'mid the boughs,  
With a dull, sad aching throb his brows.

He sees the twin flowers on the stem,  
Yet knows God's sweet dew nourishes them.  
The clouds drift past by twos and threes,  
No leaf stands single on the trees ;  
The doves together stem the wind,  
One common nest they seek and find ;  
The hollow murmurs of their note  
Like echoes through the branches float.  
The very insects swarm together,  
And dance amid the sunny weather.

Veiled in the twilight of his cowl,  
The wind seems to him the devil's howl.  
But the bird's song rises an angel's prayer,  
Cleaving the blue and crystal air,  
Until it reaches God's throne above,  
And fades in ecstasy of love.

*THE MONK AND THE WATER SPIRIT.*

Now from his missal's golden leaves  
Visions of Paradise he weaves ;  
And from the bright page on his knee  
He chants a solemn Litany.

Fourteen years last Pentecost,  
Came he to this lonely coast ;  
He did not come for doles, for alms,  
From hot Egypt and its palms,  
But for the blessed 'JESUS' sake,  
To the shore of Breddyn's reedy lake.  
Many a Candlemas fled past,  
Many a Yule has followed fast,  
Many springs have passed away,  
Many a morning grown to day.

Sudden through the long dark glade,  
A fawn stepped forth from out the shade ;  
A wreath of flowers was on its neck ;  
It came unto the lone monk's beck,  
And lead him slowly through the wood  
To where a broken cross there stood ;  
And in a valley girt with trees,  
That waved and beckoned in the breeze,  
He sees a lake spread broad and clear,  
A lake he never knew was here.

Then slowly rose from the lucid stream,  
Like a thought of joy in a lover's dream,  
A lady, pale, but O how fair !  
Like wavering moonlight fell her hair,  
And o'er a breast would shame the snow,  
In torrents rippled to and fro ;

Her eyes, as dark as winter night,  
Grew radiant with a starry light ;  
She spoke not, but she smiled and signed,  
And music filled the forest wind.

Then, like a lily folding up  
Its shrinking leaves in its silver cup,  
She slowly sank into the flood,  
Not like a mortal of flesh and blood ;  
And through the reeds, like a parting dirge,  
The low wind-murmurs creep and surge.  
Once more she rose, she held a crown,  
And smiled no more, but a cruel frown  
Lit up her face as she stretched her hand  
To the monk, who stood on the reedy sand.

\* \* \* \*

The winter had come, and the woodmen  
struck :  
The choicest boughs from the trees they  
pluck ;  
They trampled down the tangled flowers,  
And drove the fawn from its ferny bowers ;  
When they reached the lake they saw on the  
bank,  
Dead in the lake where the heron drank,  
The long-robed monk, and his white beard  
floats  
On the tide-like weeds ; while mournful notes  
The weeping willow sighs, and grieves  
To the waves that kiss its drooping leaves.





### The Dead Bride.

THE banners curl and flutter,  
 The scarfs flow crimson billowing out,  
 The silver trumpets sounding loud,  
 The people cheer with hearty shout :  
 Beneath the gilded canopy,  
 In mournful beauty and in pride,  
 Followed by lords and ladies,  
 Paces the royal bride.

In gardens, sweet but lonely,  
 The sea-god holds his trident up ;  
 Fast from his horn the bright drops pour,  
 Like silver pieces from a cup.  
 The goddess of the place is gone,  
 She heads that royal train to-day,—  
 The fruit may fall in sun and shade,  
 The flowers may bloom for whom they may.

*THE DEAD BRIDE.*

Hang tapestry from every roof,  
Bring out the silver plate and gold,  
In every room the tables set,  
With jewelled cups for young and old.  
The conduit's running red with wine,  
The minster bells are mad for joy,  
Yet not a maiden seems to smile,  
Nor laughs one single merry boy.

Not once the grim king looks at her,  
A thunder-cloud is on his brow,  
As now beneath the city gates  
Again the silver clarions blow.  
How like a conqueror he walks  
Living above the crowd, apart,  
More like the burner of a town  
Than he who wins a woman's heart.

They say he's cruel, grim, and cold,  
A fierce oppressor of the poor,  
A man relentless, hard, and bad,  
Who grinds the pale face of the poor.  
They say that she was sold to him,  
Torn like a wild dove from its nest ;  
They say she fades, like April snow.  
"T is a hard fate—but God knows best.

Yet all without the city walls  
Is white with flowering May ;  
The sunshine paves the road with gold  
This radiant holiday.  
The little birds their ceaseless hymns  
Are singing in the sky,  
Only one cloud is rolling white  
Through the blue sea on high.

And now they come to where the steeds  
With curtained litter wait,  
And watchful spearmen guarding stand  
Outside the western gate.  
Then in that little silken nest  
The bride is onward borne,  
With clang of steel and clash of brass,  
And merry-sounding horn.

O had her clothing been a shroud,  
No paler were the bride ;  
It seems as if it were a vault  
To which she deigns to ride.  
In vain the grim king whispers  
Rude warnings in her ear,  
She greets his jesting with a sigh,  
His soothing with a tear.

Sweet waters maidens sprinkled  
Before the bridal train,  
White May-flowers frolic horsemen  
Over the lady rain.  
Fair boys, with angels' voices,  
Sang hymns to love and Spring,  
Glad thousands shouted welcomes  
That make the green woods ring.

There were basses deep and lusty,  
And tenors silvery shrill  
Singing, and all together,  
As the train wound over the hill.  
But whether it was hill or moor,  
Or whether it was dale,  
The bride was ever silent,  
The bride was ever pale.

"Ho !" cried a page who stopped the band,  
"What mean ye thus to ride  
With a golden glare and a trumpet blare,  
And all for a dead-cold bride ?"  
The horsemen stopped in anger,  
And crowded to the front ;  
The bridegroom looked still sterner  
Even than he was wont.

The trumpets ceased, the voices failed,  
The banners were furled down,  
The rear ranks thought the vanguard  
Had reached the royal town.  
The ranks were broke—they drew apart  
The curtains gold and red,—  
Beneath the canopy there lay  
The young bride pale and dead.

*THE DEAD BRIDE.*



The page put ring upon her hand,  
And knelt by her dead side ;  
"Thou, Death, hast wedded her to me,"  
He in his anguish cried.

"Kill him !" a hundred voices  
Shouted ; and in a breath  
He seized the cold hand of the corpse.  
And with her welcomed death.

## The Legend of St. Vitus.

TO Cairo city, one hot afternoon,  
In the mid Summer, came an anchorite,  
Pale, shrunk as any corpse, thin, lean, and blanched,  
From dwelling in the tombs deep from the light :  
Tall, gaunt, and wan, across the desert sand  
He strode, trampling on avarice ; by his side,  
Licking his hands, two dappled panthers paced,  
With lolling tongues, and dark and tawny hide.

The gilded domes of Cairo blazed and shone,  
The minarets arose like long keen spears  
Planted around a sleeping Arab's tent.  
The Saint's attendants pricked their spotted ears  
When the Muezzin, with his droning cry,  
Summoned to prayers, and frightened vultures screamed,  
Swooping from the gilt roof that glittered in the sky,  
Or the tall parapet that o'er it gleamed.

The hermit came to where the traders sat,  
Grave turbaned men, weighing out heaps of pearls,  
Around a splashing fountain ; wafts of myrrh  
Rose to the curtained roof in wreathing curls,  
And Abyssinian slaves, with sword and bow,  
Watched at the doorway, while a dervish danced  
In giddy circles, chanting ALLAH's name,  
With long lean arms outstretched and eyes entranced.

St. Vitus spurned the gold and pearls away,  
And struck the dervish silent with a blow  
That loosened half his teeth (the infidel!),  
And tossed the censers fiercely to and fro ;  
Then sang, defiant of the angry men,  
"How long, O LORD, how long?" and raised his eyes  
To the high heaven, praying GOD to send  
Some proof to them from out those burning skies.

And when their knives flew out, and eunuchs ran,  
With steel and bowstring, swift to choke and bleed,  
The Saint drew forth from underneath his robe  
A Nubian flute, carved from a yellow reed ;

*THE LEGEND OF ST. VITUS.*



Then put it to his lips, and music rose,  
So wild and wayward that, on either hand,  
Straightway perforce the turbaned men began  
To whirl and circle like the wind-tossed sand.

*THE LEGEND OF ST. VITUS.*

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And so the Saint passed on, until he reached  
A mosque, with many domes and cupolas,  
And roof hung thick with lamps and ostrich-eggs,  
And round the walls a belt of crescent stars.  
Towards the Mecca niche the worshippers  
Bent altogether in a turbaned row;  
So, seeing this idolatry, the Saint  
Struck the chief reader twice a sturdy blow.

Then they howled all at once, and many flew,  
With sabres drawn, upon the holy man,  
To toss him to the dogs. The panthers still  
Kept them at bay until the Saint began  
Upon his flute to breathe his magic tune,  
Such as the serpent-charmers use to charm  
The sand-asps forth, and straightway priests and flock  
Began to circle round; and free from harm

He glided forth on to the Caliph's house,  
Where in divan he and the Vizier were,  
Girt with the council of the rich and wise,  
And all the Mullahs who his secrets share.  
There he raised up the crucifix on high,  
Spat on the Koran, cursed Mohammed's name,  
Took the proud Caliph's turban from his head,  
And threw it to his panthers. Fire and flame

Broke forth around him, as when in a mine  
The candle comes unguarded; swords flashed out  
By twenties, and from inner court to court  
Ran the alarm, the clamour, and the shout.  
The Saint, unmoved, drew forth his magic flute  
(It was the greatest miracle of all),  
And, lo! the soldiers, counsellors, and slaves  
Swept dancing, fever-stricken, round the hall.

Round went the Caliph with his shaven head,  
Round went the Vizier, raging as he danced.  
Round went the archers, and the sable crew  
Tore round in circles, every one entranced  
By that sweet mystic music Heaven sent;  
Round, round in ceaseless circles, swifter still,—  
Till dropped each sword, till dropped each bow unbent.



### *GUIDO'S MODEL.*

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And then the Saint once more into the street  
Glided unhurt, and sought the market-place,  
Where dates rolled forth from baskets, and the figs  
Were purple ripe, and every swarthy face  
Was hot with wrangling; and he cursed Mahound  
Loud in the midst, and set up there his cross,  
O'er the mosque gate, and wailed aloud a psalm,—  
“Let GOD arise, and all His foes confound.”

But the fierce rabble hissed, and throwing stones,  
Shouted, “Slay, slay the wretch!” and “Kill, kill, kill!”  
And some seized palm-tree staves and jagged shards;  
In every eye there was a murderous will,  
Until the Saint drew forth again his flute,  
And all the people drove to the mad dance,  
With nodding heads and never-wearying feet,  
And leaden eyes fixed in a magic trance.

And so he left them dancing: one by one  
They fell in swoons and fevers, worn and spent.  
Then the stern anchorite took his magic flute,  
And broke it o'er his knee, and homeward went,  
Tossing the useless tube, now split and rent,  
Upon the sand; then through the desert gate  
Passed, with his panthers ever him beside;  
And raised his hands to heaven and shouted forth,  
“Amen, amen! God's name be glorified!”

---

### **Guido's Model.**

GUIDO RENI in a Roman palace chamber  
Sat one pleasant Summer afternoon  
(’T was the old Farnese’s sumptuous palace).  
The walls were blazoned with the gilded moon  
In crescent, and sweet tangles of those flowers  
That blossom into faces, while birds play,  
Fluttering from twig to twig, and lizards run  
Below, and jewelled beetles crawl from spray to spray.

### GUIDO'S MODEL

---

The great hall window, reaching to the floor,  
Stood open for the vine to ramble in ;  
The birds were in the garden down below ;  
The silver-columned fountain, tall and thin  
As a magician's wand, rose in the air ;  
Great yellow clouds, laden with sunshine, passed ;  
The sky, one flawless sapphire, floated there.

Guido was painting, half entranced in thought ;  
Quietly painting that pure, gentle face  
You've seen in lonely chapels oft and oft ;  
Calm, sweet, and radiant, with a saintly grace ;  
Chaste as a virgin martyr glorified ;  
Without one thought of earth, pure as the snow  
Upon the Alp-peak, with no stain of sin  
Sullyng her form, save where one rapturous glow

Of coldest sunshine lit her marbly breast ;  
The dove-like eyes were all intent on heaven.  
A Sabbath sanctity was in the air,  
And not one glare of Passion's burning leven.  
Where was the proud and dark-eyed beauty then,  
The painter's model? Where the peasant girl  
All love and happiness? Where, then, was she  
With throbbing bosom and with lavish curl?

Only a blear-eyed crone in a low chair,  
Facing the central window, dozed or prayed.  
Her cheeks were wrinkled leather, and her hair,  
In one grey half-starved knot of grizzled braid,  
Crowned her old nodding, semi-palsied head.  
Her breviary was resting on her knees,  
Nor recked she what the chiding painter said.

In came the cardinal, grave, and coldly wise.  
His scarlet gown and robes of cobweb lace  
Trailed on the marble floor ; with convex glass  
He bent o'er Guido's shoulder ; soon his face  
Grew wistful, and then curdled to a smile,  
As he beheld the crone, and looked again.  
"Where is thy model, Guido?" Guido said,  
"I keep her, cardinal, locked up in my brain."



## The Apparitor of the Secret Tribunal.

ALBERT DÜRER'S AGE.

I STOLE into the armourer's forge,  
 He could not hear me for the beat  
 Of his strong hammer rivetting  
 The gold that needs but burnishing.  
 (I trod with stealthy velvet feet.)  
 The gilded gorget all but done,  
 One furbish of the blazoned sun—  
 Of the keen biting file, one rasp—  
 Of the close pincers, just a grasp.  
 He roused the furnace ; fierce, though slow,  
 The fading coals began to glow ;

The dark and light in pulses came.  
 I dropped the roll, and when the flame  
 Came roaring back—I was away.  
 We meet again—perhaps to-day.

The painter stood with brush in hand,  
 Beside his work of twenty years ;  
 His palette cracked and underfoot,  
 His canvas wet with passion's tears.  
 Behind a screen I stood to mark  
 The sequel of his hopes and fears.

*THE APPARITOR OF THE SECRET TRIBUNAL.*

The skeleton, hung in a frame,  
Grinned at his master's lust for fame.  
The Titian Venuses laughed round  
From painted ceiling where they're bound.  
He fell asleep. I thrust the band  
That tied the roll into his hand.

The statesman at his levée sat,  
A pimp was whispering in his ear ;  
The Seven deadly Sins stood round,  
His mistress and his monk were near.  
He spurned a peasant with his foot,  
And all the courtiers laughed to see.  
I smiled, but longed to show the scroll  
Would spoil their grinning revelry.  
Then with the crowd I knelt to kiss  
The great man's robe, and in his sleeve  
I slipped the thing. I saw him start,  
A coward, smitten to the heart.  
(We meet before to-morrow eve.)  
But I was gone ere he could cry,

"Ho! Switzers! stop that villain spy!"

I found the abbot at his shrine,  
Aflame with candles, line on line ;  
The incense hid him ; crossed with gold  
His vestments were. I groped my way  
Through mists of myrrh, to kiss his hand,  
The foremost of the kneeling band ;  
And while the holy father turned  
To where the lighted tapers burned  
To bless the people, in the Pyx  
I slipped the letter sealed with red—  
I laughed to see his solemn tread,  
His silver bell, his cross of gems,  
His bows, and all his holy tricks,  
His gold and ivory crucifix.  
I stayed, under my hood to see  
The end of all that mummary,  
And just as belfries knelled the noon,  
I saw the good man reel and swoon.

The chemist's spell was at its height,  
A triumph filled his fading eye ;

Upon one hand there fell a light,  
He knew not that a friend was nigh.  
A golden scum was rising fast  
Within his urn of tepid glass :  
A crucible with crimson oil  
Began to seethe, and hiss, and boil.  
He now was lord of earth and heaven,  
He trod on kings—(a juggler's dream) ;  
He saw the vassal monarchs pass,  
Hailing him sage and lord (the ass !)  
I threw the warning letter in,  
And left the fool to guess his sin.

The page was singing by the wall  
Of the park terrace, blithe as May.  
The mole crept out to hear the boy ;  
The hawk beside him dropped his prey ;  
The bees grew silent in the flower ;  
The thorn-bush shook its snowy shower  
For pleasure ; rabbits came to feed  
Around him, on the crop-eared mead.  
I tied the notice to his hook  
While he was poring o'er his book,  
Heedless of float and rod—in dreams  
Of Luther and his devil schemes.

The baron chattered to his hawk,  
The jester teased the kingly bird ;  
The children, on the terrace walk,  
Were playing with a giant sword.  
The baron smote his tardy grooms,  
Cursed the old steward, called for wines,  
And frowned—when red upon the wall,  
As red as blood, the sunset shines.  
It passed—night sponged it out—ah, would  
Time could erase a stain of blood !  
I bribed the jester with a gaud  
To hand my letter to his lord.

The merchant sat beside his bales,  
Waiting for news from Helvoetsluys,  
To say his ship, in spite of gales,  
Had reached the port without a bruise.  
Each moment turned his bloodshot eyes

*THE APPARITOR OF THE SECRET TRIBUNAL.*



Unto the doorway, where his clerks  
Were weighing treasure saved from sharks,  
From reef and galley, Turk and Jew,  
From tempest, leak, and whirlpool blue.  
Just as the windows darkened there,  
I set my foot upon the stair.  
“Arrived from Holland—safe—a prize,  
Good tidings of the two Allies.”  
I push the letter underneath  
The cheating villain’s chattering teeth.  
He calls, impatiently, “A light!”  
It comes—but I am out of sight.

I sought the leper in his hut,  
Darkened with nettles: he, the boor,  
The poorest of the vilest poor,  
Stood groping in the slimy fen  
For leeches for the fevered men  
He dwelt with—doling out a hymn.  
He stooped and toiled—good LORD! to  
see  
One happy in his misery.  
Such fools and slaves this heresy  
Beguiles. I slipped into his creel  
The warning of the rope and steel.

*THE RIDE OF NOSTRADAMUS.*

---

So spreads the net, and such the haul  
That one night's summonses will bring.  
It's thus we catch the toad and eft,  
And clear religion's tainted spring,  
Purging the air with fires and fires,  
Till, beacon-like, these ceaseless pyres  
Shall burn away the Lutheran mist,  
And show man heaven. Peace has kissed  
Righteousness long enough, I wist.

To-night we meet the painter fool,  
The brutal baron, and the sage—  
His gold dissolved; the armourer—  
His work all done—upon one stage  
The merchant and the alchemist—  
Gold-winner and gold-maker. See

The men in black—the rope and steel,  
The straining rack, the bruising wheel,  
The torture-water, and the vaults  
Where fools throw bloody somersaults;  
So deep, no tell-tale groan can rise  
To God, who watches in the skies,  
With smiles, these scourgéd heresies!

To-night a pleasant company  
All shaking in a row, before  
The three, the ten, the six, the four,  
The cross-swords, angle, star, and eye,  
The open book, the mystery.  
We meet—they come this very eve;  
But when go hence?—nay, by your leave.

---

*The Ride of Nostradamus.*

*SCENE, PARIS.—TEMP. 800.*

NOSTRADAMUS, wizard old, in his mantle fringed with gold,  
Came to chide the wicked king;  
Threw into his foolish lap Normandy's red cancelled map,  
Told him of his woes—the spring.  
Ludovicos the Wicked spurned, as his beard he champ'd and churned,  
The gold footstool at his feet;  
Nostradamus, with a frown, broke in two the royal crown,  
Crying, "Fool, thy fate is meet!"

Then the king with angry eyes, and a face of many dyes,  
Lifted up his ivory rod;  
Smote the old man, bent and weak, on his thin and withered cheek.  
"Is our juggler turned a god?"  
Nostradamus at the gates mounts his horse that champing waits—  
What a red scar on his face!—  
Rides through Paris hot in anger, with an iron din and clangour,  
Heaping curses on the place.

*THE RIDE OF NOSTRADAMUS.*

---

"Murrain and red blister-blight all thy burghers spot and bite!  
Lightnings shrivel up the dead!  
Hear me, beings of the air, wheresoever now ye fare,—  
Melt the gold crown from his head!"  
As the angry wizard spoke, witch-fogs rose as thick as smoke,  
Drowning all the roofs and spires:  
Through these mists like arrows passed, hot and eager, fierce and fast,  
Lurid shafts of sudden fires.

This dark necromantic spell was, I'm certain, heard in hell,  
For an earthquake shook the street;  
At the clatter of his hoofs, spectres danced upon the roofs,  
Voices answered deep and frequent underneath our trembling feet.  
"Water-demons, livid blue, river rapids looking through,  
Drive your corpses down the fords!  
Mine and Salamander kings, with your fiery throbbing wings,  
Smite with fevers as with swords!"

Tempests shook the double towers, where the bells proclaimed the hours,  
O'er the roofs of Notre-Dame;  
Shooting stars fell sheaf by sheaf, like the Autumn's dropping leaf,  
Raining as the darkness came.  
Then the listening weathercocks, perched above the turret clocks,  
Clapped their golden wings and crowed;  
Up the stone king on the bridge leaped from frozen saddle-ridge,  
Where for centuries he rode.

When the abbey door he past, spurring hot, and fierce and fast,  
All the blood-red royal martyrs in the golden sheets of glass  
At the eastern window glared—even Pontius Pilate stared,  
Seeing Nostradamus pass.  
Withered bishop on his tomb, praying for the knell of doom,  
Rose erect, and slowly lifted crumbling grave-clothes from his face;  
Cross-legged old crusading knight sprang impatient for the fight,  
With the devil-army crowding to the Jewish battle-place.

Though it was the midnight time, just as if at chilly prime,  
All the bells began to clash;  
Every giant beat his mace on the well-worn hollow place  
With an anger mad and rash;  
Every clock began to strike any hour it seemed to like—  
All the wheels were on the buzz;  
Every hand was on the move, every weight ran in its groove,  
Fit to chafe the man of Uz.

*THE RIDE OF NOSTRADAMUS.*

---

As he passed the river-arch where the sentries freeze or parch,  
All the silver fish stared there,  
Looking up with wondering mouth, whether you gazed north or south,  
Gaping for both speech and air.  
As he threads the city gate, where the stone gods sit and wait,  
Down they hurled their marble globes.  
Have you seen—has any one—how the eighteen-pounders run?—  
Thistle-down against his robes.

Watch-dogs' loud and frightened howls woke the eager-mousing owls  
On the roof and in the tower;  
Whizz! they flew in frightened rout, from the church bells round about,  
Where with hoots they count the hour.  
With a shrieking yell and bark, every hound awoke the dark,  
Tugging fierce at kennel-chain;  
Yellow-toothed and carrion rats woke the miller's sleeping cats  
By their squeaking in the grain.

Splashing storms with bitter pelt on the barred-up windows melt,  
Scaring sleeping citizen;  
Nightmares, many-hoofed and red, trod and trampled on the bed  
Of the beggar in his den—  
Woke him by a dying scream from a cruel suffering dream:  
Many naked rose to pray.  
Comets with a crimson glare blazed across the troubled air,  
Till the night was bright as day.

Ay! that very night there fell, long before the matin-bell,  
Wrath and curses dire and dark;  
Thunder, with its blasting boom, split the blessed martyr's tomb;  
Lightnings splintered on St. Mark;  
Fire ran fast along the ground, darkness dismally profound  
Covered Paris—pomp and pride;  
Children, though unborn, might rue that dread curse that blighting flew:—  
Curse not wizards when they ride!

But a year had passed away, just a year—the very day,  
And the doom had come indeed:  
Wicked Louis, gashed and red, lay upon his battle-bed,  
Careless of his realms that bleed.  
Now the moral of my tale: Let the wise man never fail  
To respect a wizard's age,  
Never pull his reverend hair, never mock him with a stare:  
Dreadful is the wizard's rage!





### The Jester's Passing Bell.

*A LEGEND OF THE REIGN OF FRANCIS THE FIRST: DURING WHOSE REIGN THE "BLACK DEATH"—AN INFECTIOUS SPECIES OF PLAGUE—RAVAGED BOTH ENGLAND AND FRANCE.*

NOON.

THE Jester with his crazy eye,  
 And his cat-soft velvet foot,  
 Comes slipping between the grey beech trunks  
 And over the green-mossed root:  
 Now with a cuckoo's double note,  
 Now with the white owl's hoot.

*THE JESTER'S PASSING BELL.*

---

The palace gardens, rich with flowers  
Of Indian scent and lustre,  
Are where, at dusk, the nightingales  
Do most delight to muster.  
But now the sunshine's golden darts  
Do such shy creatures fluster.

The Jester, tolling his silver bell,  
Comes where the fountain leaps,  
Waving its snowy feather  
O'er its shadow as it sleeps,  
Where the elm its mount of whispering leaves  
In summer richness heaps.

The palace gardens, sunshine-paved,  
Are gay with lords and ladies ;  
The royal peacock struts i' the sun,  
The blackbird sings where shade is ;  
The bloodhound, basking by the gate,  
Of page nor groom afraid is.

The Jester glides through every group,  
Tolling his silver bell ;  
(None know the meaning of the thing,  
Or how it so befell,  
Nor think he does it bodingly,  
Calling to heaven or hell.)

Where bearded, anxious councillors  
Are seated in divan,  
Or ladies tired in velvet,  
Each with a silver fan.  
The Jester tolls o'er the charts and maps  
That cover the red-lined plan.

Where a duchess proud is fitting  
For to-night the yellow mask,  
The Jester's death-bell tolling  
Frightens her from her task.  
She fears to question Bobinel,  
Nor his meaning dares to ask.

Through every palace chamber  
So trips the crazy creature,

*THE YESTER'S PASSING BELL.*



With pale thin face, with frightened eye,  
And death in every feature.  
It was somehow ominous of ill,  
And something above nature.

*THE JESTER'S PASSING BELL.*

---

EVENING.

Now as the Jester on the steps  
Of the broad terrace lingers,  
Touching the cord of his boding bell  
With lean and shrunken fingers,  
There comes from a distant tower the voice  
Of the requiem's hooded singers.

He comes to where the damsels sit,  
Each in her gold-net caul,  
Working on tapestry, fit for a queen,  
"The death of the Prophet Paul."  
Quoth he: "This Jew that you build of thread,  
Will laugh at the world when they've buried us all."

He creeps to the door of the steward's room:  
The steward counts and reads;  
Before him lie three open chests  
Brimming with title-deeds.  
Quoth he: "This parchment lasts for years,  
And life-long mischief breeds."

Where gilded spears are breaking  
In the merry tilting-ring;  
Where frightened dames, half laughing,  
Unto their lovers cling;  
Where pages whisper messages  
With low and bated breath,  
Bobinel, with his silver bell,  
Announces—the King—Death!

NIGHT.

That night, King Plague came knocking  
At the royal palace gate;  
There were groans in turret chambers,  
Where all was pomp and state;  
There were frozen faces on gilt beds—  
That warning had come too late.

There were corpses borne away on biers  
By men veiled fold on fold;  
The city was full of cries and moans,  
There was nothing bought nor sold;  
The graves were gaping everywhere—  
Too late had the Jester tolled.



### The Lady Witch.

THE lady witch foreknew her doom,  
 The fatal hour was slowly looming,  
 The sky grew coffin-black, the tomb  
 Was gaping for her : she must die.  
 The term the devil's bond laid down,  
 Had run : good angels on her frown.

She went to bid her magic world  
 A long good bye. The forest flowers  
 No more for her on dewy showers  
 Must nightly feed. The clouds were  
 furred

That floated o'er her as she walked :  
 She went to let her subjects free,  
 Enslaved for that long century.

The sunlight, striking through a cloud  
 That lit the rosy balmy air,  
 Shed on her blanchéd cheek, once fair,  
 False hues that seemed to make her proud,  
 As from the wood that lady came,  
 And laughed to see the fountain gay  
 Shower pearls in wantonness away.

She spoke a word that could eclipse  
 The moon at midnight, stay the bird  
 In the mid-sky, yea ! chill the lips  
 Of the hot devil. It was heard  
 By the cold figure of the fountain god :  
 He dropped his carved marble horn,  
 And trembled as she laughed in scorn ;

*THE LADY WITCH.*

He trembled, and, his fountain's stream  
Shook as if driven by the wind,  
As fierce against the elm-trees' rind,  
The water, with a banner's gleam,  
Flew silvering out, and then sank back :  
Now, when she turned towards the south,  
Broke murmurs from his marble mouth.

She touched the rough oak : lo ! it shook  
Up to its topmost leaf and spray ;  
All its rude branches bent one way,  
Casting snake shadows in the brook—  
Dark winding shapes that writhed about :  
The very roots beneath the ground  
Were shuddering at that magic sound.

She struck the water with her hand,  
And pale drowned faces crowded up,  
Like bubbles in a brimming cup :  
The dead were all at her command :  
The ripples ceased, the brook stood still.  
She passed—the shadows in her train,  
And all was life and joy again.

She came to fields of golden flowers,  
Which waved as when the breezy south  
Kisses the young Spring's rosy mouth,  
Drying the fretful April showers ;  
Through the tall grass a murmur ran.  
She passed ; again the sun broke forth,  
From east to west, from south to north.

The birds came headlong at her call,  
And sang into her little ear  
The angels' secrets. Without fear  
The robin, from the beech-tree tall,  
Led her confiding to his nest.  
Among the sapphire eggs with care  
She looked—no magic stone was there.

Where'er she went the shadows came,  
Gathering behind her in a train  
Sad and funereal, as when rain  
Darkens the sun. She spoke a name

That made them follow—none refused—  
Formless and dark : they are the shapes  
That mock at man—our sorrows' apes.

From underneath their mushroom tent  
The vassal fairies, half afraid,  
Creeped out, and at her feet they laid  
Rough acorn-bowls of pure dew, sent  
From cellars of King Oberon,  
And showed her in the half-shut flowers  
The black bees cringing from the showers.

She sang—the air grew dark with wings,  
And musical with choral throngs,  
The thrushes whistled endless songs,  
The blue air with their gladness rings.  
The very fledgelings on the bough  
Chirped, every one, as best they could ;  
Joy filled the dark heart of the wood.

She called—and all the Summer air  
Grew iris with the coloured mail  
Of beetles, glittering horn and tail.  
All jewels had their rivals there :  
Gold moved about the forest ground,  
With glittering emerald and pearl,  
And diamond wings that fold and furl.

She raised her hand—and from above  
The amber cloud dissolved in rain,  
Then, leaping round her, like a train  
Of dancing spirits mad with love,  
Sprang the globed diamond-glistening  
drops.  
Down fell the dew that gemmed the larch,  
Bright o'er her rose the rainbow-arch.

She called—and from the cloven ground  
Three fountains leaped up arrow swift ;  
As snap their chains the wild beasts bound  
Sprang forth the water's silver drift,  
Tracking the lark up through the sky ;  
The silver columns joined the cloud  
To earth, so frail and yet so proud.

### THE CAVALIER'S ESCAPE.

---

She sighed—the music in the trees  
Grew into slow and tearful song,  
Mourning intolerable wrong.  
A funeral murmur made the breeze  
Sound as of stifling, sobbing words ;  
Yet every other thing on earth  
But that sad wind seemed full of mirth.

The gloom came lower, lower still,  
Hiding reluctantly the earth ;  
The Spring day, at that sunshine dearth,  
Cowered timidly for fear of ill.  
The lady witch's hour of doom  
Was nigh she knew, so silent stood  
The awe-struck trees in the hushed wood.

She called to her the old stern sea,  
She beckoned on the ridgy shore,  
Then ceased that wild complaining roar,  
And music moved upon the wave,

Rising in solemn symphony.  
The very storm-birds ceased their screams,  
And floated silent as in dreams.

Then once more all the waves began  
To roar for her : with foaming lips  
The breakers swept like an eclipse  
Over the sky and rocks ; a tempest lashed  
The billows on in legions. Can  
Old Neptune tame such steeds as these,  
And urge them wheresoe'er he please ?

Then she, slow gliding like a snake,  
Passed down the hard and level sands,  
Wringing her little helpless hands,  
To where the first waves, leaping, break ;  
Then, as a creature bound and driven,  
She passed into the whirlpool's hell.  
Whither ? I may not dare to tell.

---

### The Cavalier's Escape.

TRAMPLE ! trample ! went the roan,  
Trap ! trap ! went the grey ;  
But pad ! *pad* ! PAD ! like a thing that was mad,  
My chestnut broke away.—  
It was just five miles from Salisbury town,  
And but one hour to day.

Thud ! THUD ! came on the heavy roan,  
Rap ! RAP ! the mettled grey ;  
But my chestnut mare was of blood so rare,  
That she showed them all the way.  
Spur on ! spur on !—I doffed my hat,  
And wished them all good day.

*THE CAVALIER'S ESCAPE.*

They splashed through miry rut and pool,—  
Splintered through fence and rail;  
But chestnut Kate switched over the gate—  
I saw them droop and tail.  
To Salisbury town—but a mile of down,  
Once over this brook and rail.



Trap! trap! I heard their echoing hoofs  
Past the walls of mossy stone;  
The roan flew on at a staggering pace,  
But blood is better than bone.  
I patted old Kate, and gave her the spur,  
For I knew it was all my own.

But trample! trample! came their steeds,  
And I saw their wolfs' eyes burn;  
I felt like a royal hart at bay,



## THE LEGEND OF THE LOCKHARTS

---

And made me ready to turn.  
I looked where highest grew the May,  
And deepest arched the fern.

I flew at the first knave's sallow throat ;  
One blow, and he was down.  
The second rogue fired twice, and missed ;  
I sliced the villain's crown.  
Clove through the rest, and flogged brave Kate,  
*Fast, fast to Salisbury town !*

Pad ! pad ! they came on the level sward,  
Thud ! thud ! upon the sand ;  
With a gleam of swords, and a burning match,  
And a shaking of flag and hand :  
But one long bound, and I passed the gate,  
Safe from the canting band.

---

## The Legend of the Lockharts.

### I.

KING ROBERT on his death-bed lay, wasted in every limb,  
The priests had left, Black Douglas now alone was watching him :  
The earl had wept to hear those words, "When I am gone to doom,  
'Take thou my heart and bear it straight unto the Holy Tomb."

### II.

Douglas shed bitter tears of grief—he loved the buried man,  
So bade farewell to home and wife, to brother and to clan ;  
And soon the Bruce's heart, embalmed, in silver casket locked,  
Within a galley, white with sails, upon the blue waves rocked.

### III.

In Spain they rested ; there the king besought the Scottish earl,  
To drive the Saracens from Spain, his galley sails to furl :  
It was the brave knight's eagerness to quell the Paynim brood  
That made him then forget the oath he'd sworn upon the Rood.

*THE LEGEND OF THE LOCKHARTS.*

---

IV.

That was his sin: good angels frowned upon him as he went  
With vizor down and spear in rest, lips closed, and black brow bent;  
Upon the turbans fierce he spurred, the charger he bestrode  
Was splashed with blood, their robes and flags he trampled on the road.

V.

The Moors came fast with cymbal-clash and tossing javelin,  
Ten thousand horsemen, at the least, round Castile closing in;  
Quick as a deer's foot snaps the ice Black Douglas thundered through,  
And struck with sword and smote with axe among the heathen crew.

VI.

The horse-tail banners beaten down, the mounted archers fled—  
There came full many an Arab curse from faces smeared with red:  
The vizor fell, a Scottish shaft had struck him on the breast;  
Many a Moslem's frightened horse was bleeding head and chest.

VII.

But suddenly the caitiffs turned and gathered like a net;  
In closed the tossing sabres fast, and soon were crimson wet;  
Steel jarred on steel—war hammers smote on helmet and on sword,  
Yet Douglas never ceased to charge upon that heathen horde.

VIII.

Till all at once his eager eye discerned amid the fight  
St. Clair of Roslyn, Bruce's friend, a brave and trusty knight,  
Beset with Moors who hewed at him with sabres dripping blood—  
'T was in a rice-field where he stood, close to an orange-wood.

IX.

Then to the rescue of St. Clair Black Douglas spurred amain:  
The Moslems circled him around, and shouting charged again;  
Then took he from his neck the heart, and as the case he threw,  
"Pass first in fight," he cried aloud, "as thou wert wont to do!"

X.

They found him ere the sun had set upon that fatal day;  
His body was above the case, that closely guarded lay,  
His swarthy face was grim in death, his sable hair was stained  
With the life-blood of the felon Moors, whom he had struck and brained.

THE OLD CATHEDRAL ORGANIST.

XI.

Sir Simon Lockhart, knight of Lee, bore home the silver case,  
To shrine it in a stately grave and in a holy place.  
The Douglas deep in Spanish ground they left in royal tomb,  
To wait in hope and patient trust the trumpet of the Doom.

The Old Cathedral Organist.

'T IS forty years ago since first  
I climbed these dusty, winding stairs  
To play the Dean in : how I spurned  
Beneath my feet all meaner cares,  
When first I leant, my cheek on fire,  
And looked down blushing at the choir !

Handel, and Haydn, and Mozart—  
I thought they watched me as I played ;  
While Palestrina's stern, sad face  
Seemed in the twilight to upbraid ;  
Pale fingers moved upon the keys—  
The ghost-hands of past centuries.

Behind my oaken battlement  
Above the door I used to lean,  
And watch the puffing crimson hood,  
As floated in, full sail, the Dean ;  
And then, the organ breathing low,  
Began to murmur soft and slow.

I used to shut my eyes, and hear  
The solemn prophecy and psalm  
Rise up like incense ; and I loved  
Before the prayer the lull and calm,  
Till, like a stream that bursts its banks,  
Broke forth brave Purcell's " O give Thanks."

I knew those thirteen hundred pipes  
And thirty stops, as blind men do  
The voices of the friends they love,  
The birds' song, and the thunder too ;  
And the fierce diapason's roar,  
Like storms upon a rocky shore.

And now to-day I yield me up  
The dusty seat, my old loved throne,  
Unto another ; and no more  
Shall come here in the dusk alone,  
Or in the early matin hour,  
To hear my old friend's voice of power.

And yet methinks that, centuries hence,  
Lying beneath the chancel floor,  
In that dark nook I shall delight  
To hear the anthem's swell once more,  
And to myself shall calmly smile  
When music floods the vaulted aisle.

Or mocking gravely at some hand  
Less skilful than my own was once,  
In my snug nest I'll lie, and mark  
The blunders of the foolish dunce ;  
But to myself the secret keep,  
And turn me round again to sleep.



## The Court Historian.

*LOWER EMPIRE, CIRCA 700 A.D.*

THE monk Arnulphus uncorked his ink,  
That shone with a blood-red light,  
Just as the sun began to sink ;  
His vellum was pumiced a silvery white :  
"The Basileus"—for so he began—  
"Is a royal sagacious Mars of a man,  
Than the very lion bolder ;  
He has married the stately widow of Thrace"—  
"Hush !" cried a voice at his shoulder.

His palette gleamed with a burnished green,  
Bright as a dragon-fly's skin ;  
His gold-leaf shone like the robe of a queen ;  
His azure glowed as a cloud worn thin,  
Deep as the blue of the king-whale's lair :  
"The Porphyrogenita Zoe the fair  
Is about to wed with a prince much older,  
Of an unpropitious mien and look"—  
"Hush !" cried a voice at his shoulder.

The red flowers trellised the parchment page,  
The birds leaped up on the spray,  
The yellow fruit swayed and drooped and swung ;  
It was Autumn mixed up with May.  
(O but his cheek was shrivelled and shrunk !)  
"The child of the Basileus," wrote the monk,  
"Is golden-haired, tender, the queen's arms fold her,  
Her step-mother Zoe doth love her so"—  
"Hush !" cried a voice at his shoulder.

The kings and martyrs and saints and priests  
All gathered to guard the text :  
There was Daniel snug in the lions' den,  
Singing, no whit perplexed ;  
Brazen Samson with spear and helm :—  
"The queen," wrote the monk, "rules firm the realm,  
For the king gets older and older ;  
The Norseman Thorkill is brave and fair"—  
"Hush !" cried a voice at his shoulder.



### The Night after Culloden.

THE cherry-coloured satin  
 Moved with its peacock-train,  
 As the four and twenty fiddlers  
 Struck up a merry strain.  
 There was the Laird o' the Willow Glen,  
 And Sir John of Siller Hall;  
 Not to forget the Lairds of Fife,  
 With the Flanders lace and fall.

The yellow satin and the black,  
 The crimson and the blue,  
 Moved solemnly along the room,  
 Slow pacing, two and two.  
 Cinnamon coat and claret vest  
 Wore old Sir Robert Clare,  
 He had the small-sword by his side,  
 And the powder in his hair.

The dance was set, the fiddlers stood  
 With their suspended bows,  
 When at the gate into the street  
 There fell three angry blows;  
 Then, with a bang of folding-doors,  
 As out flew many a blade,  
 A stranger came: his red hat bore  
*The Hanover cockade.*

Swords blazed above his fearless head,  
 Swords hedged the brave man round;  
 Swords flashed and glittered past his eyes,  
 Keen pointed, newly ground.  
 Ten ladies fainted, twenty screamed;  
 The satins shook and stirred;  
 He stood as in the eagle trap,  
 A crowned and royal bird.

## THE STATUE IN THE MARKET-PLACE.

The fiddler with a trembling rasp  
Slipped fiddle in its bag ;  
The trumpeter with quavering note  
In time began to lag ;  
The dancer, half-way through the dance,  
Stopped, listening half afraid,—  
Oh, shame for twenty Jacobites  
To tremble at one blade !

“Good gentlemen,” the stranger cried,  
Waving away the swords,  
“Charles Stuart, whom ye call your chief,  
With all his naked hordes,  
Is routed on Culloden Moor,—  
God bless the day of Spring !—  
He flies ! a price is on his head !  
Adieu ! *God save the King !*”

He spoke with such a manly voice,  
Head up, and chest full spread,  
No rebel dared to even touch  
The badge upon his head.  
The swords drooped down, and on their  
knees  
Some prayed and sobbed and wept :  
How frantically towards the door  
A dozen Tories leapt !

Ten rakehells galloped down the strand  
To ship for Popish France,—  
A pretty way for gentlemen  
To end a pleasant dance !  
You cried “Pretender !” and the blood  
Rose hot into their face :  
These were the men who, beggar-like,  
Filled church and market-place.

With slinking heads the old lords went  
To take coach at the door ;  
They would not stay for stirrup-cup,  
But hurried to the shore.  
The ferry-boats were filled that night  
With muffled men in black,  
And every northern road was choked  
With horsemen spurring back.

I shuddered when the sheriff came  
Unto the market-place ;  
The scaffolds grew around the cross,  
Stern was the hangman’s face.  
All night the sullen hammers went ;  
And when the day turned white,  
They brought the wounded creatures out—  
The relics of the fight.

## The Statue in the Market-place.

### I.

IN the market-place of Ypres, three hundred years ago,  
A crumbling statue, old, and rent by many a lightning blow,  
Stood—sad and stern, and grim and blank—upon its mossy base ;  
The woes of many centuries were frozen in its face.

It was a Cæsar some men said, and some said Charlemagne,  
Yet no one knew when he it aped began or ceased to reign,  
Nor who it was, nor what it was, could any rightly say,  
For the date upon its pedestal was fretted quite away.

*THE STATUE IN THE MARKET-PLACE.*

---

When blue and ghastly moonshine fell, severing the shadows dark,  
And stars above were shining out with many a diamond spark,  
It used to cast its giant shade across the market square,  
And through the darkness and the shine it fixed its stony stare.

'T was said that where its shadow fell on a certain day and year,  
An hour at least past midnight, when the moon was up and clear,  
Near to that statue's mouldy base, deep hid beneath the ground,  
A treasure vast of royal wealth was certain to be found.

Slow round, as round a dial-plate, its sharp dark shadow passed,  
On fountain and cathedral roof by turns eclipse it cast;  
Before it fled the pale blue light, chased as man's life by death,  
And deep you heard the great clock tick, like a sleeping giant's breath.

II.

In that same market-place there lived an alchemist of fame,  
A lean and yellow dark-eyed man, Hans Memling was his name;  
In scarlet hood and blood-red robe, in crimson vest and gown,  
For twenty years, the moonlight through, he'd sat and watched the town.

Like one flame lit he used to peer between the mullions there,  
As yonder stars shot blessed light through the clear midnight air;  
When, chess-board-chequered, black and white, part silver and part jet,  
The city lay in light and shade, barred with the moonbeams' net.

When gable-ends and pinnacles, and twisted chimney-stalks,  
Rose thick around the market square and its old cloistered walks,  
When gurgoyles on the Minster tower made faces at the moon,  
The convent gardens were as bright as if it had been noon,—

Memling—the miser alchemist—then left his crimson vials,  
His Arab books, his bottled toads, his sulphurous fiery trials,  
His red-hot crucibles, and dyes that turned from white to blue,  
His silver trees that starry rose the crystal vases through.

The room was piled with ponderous tomes, thick ribbed and silver clasped,  
The letters twined with crimson flowers, the covers golden hasped,  
With dripping stills and furnaces, whose doors were smouldered black,  
With maps of stars and charts of seas lined with untraversed track.

In dusty corners of his room black spiders mischief knit,  
A skeleton, bound hand and foot, did ever by him sit,  
Pale corpses, prisoned all in glass, stood round his chamber barred,  
Two mummies at his blistered door kept ever watch and ward.

### THE STATUE IN THE MARKET-PLACE.

The "Red Man" he had long since bound—the "Dragon" he had chased,  
No spell of Arabic alchemist but he had long since traced;  
They said he only stirred the lead, and straight it turned to gold;  
And so his wickedness and wealth increased a hundredfold.

Slow round, as round a dial-plate, the statue's shadow passed,  
On fountain and cathedral roof by turns eclipse it cast,  
Before it fled the pale blue light, chased as man's life by death,  
Deep, low you heard the great clock tick, like a sleeping giant's breath.

### III.

The moonbeams in cascades of light poured from the poplar's crown,  
Rippling in silvery lustre the leafy columns down,  
They roofed the town-hall fair and bright with bonny silver slates,  
They even turned to argent pure the bars of the prison gates.

The maiden slumbering in her bed awoke that blessed night,  
And thought her angel sisters three had come all veiled in light;  
The wild-beast felon in his cell started and thought it day,  
Cursing the torturer who, he dreamt, had chid him for delay.

The angel host of King and Saint, o'er the Minster's western door,  
Shone radiant in the blessed light—so radiant ne'er before,  
As now began the airy chimes in the cathedral tower  
To chant, as with a lingering grief, the dirges of the hour.

That day at sunset there had come a voice unto this man,  
And said as plain as Devil-voice or friendly spirit can,  
"Go, Memling, dig beneath the base of the statue in the square,  
The *Secret of all Secrets*'s hid beneath the earth-heaps there."

He shook his hand at stars and moon, then shut his furnace up,  
First draining off a magic draught from an Egyptian cup,  
For he dreamt he saw his room piled full of solid bars or gold,  
Great bags of jewels, diamond-blocks, spoil of the kings of old.

The fitting hour was just at hand, the alchemist arose;  
Upon the eaves the rain-drop tears in ice-jags shining froze;  
His starry lantern duly lit, with cold he crept and shook,  
As with his pickaxe and his spade his stealthy way he took.

The shadow marked the fitting place, King Saturn ruled the hour,  
The Devil, floating o'er his slave, smiled at his puny power;  
Hans Memling plied his crowbar fast—the *thirteenth* blow he gave,  
The ponderous statue fell, and crushed the brains out of the knave.



## THE POMPADOUR.

Then clear and still the moonshine pure upon the lone square lay,—  
No shadow left to sully it, it spread as bright as day;  
At dawn they found Hans Memling, crushed, dead-cold beneath the stone,  
*But what he saw, and what he found, has never yet been known.*

### The Pompadour.

VERSAILLES.—Up the chesnut alley,  
All in flower, so white and pure,  
Strut the red and yellow lacqueys  
Of this Madame Pompadour.

“Clear the way!” cry out the lacqueys,  
Elbowing the lame and poor  
From the chapel’s stately porches—  
“Way for Madame Pompadour!”

Old bent soldiers, crippled veterans,  
Sigh and hobble, sad, footsore,  
Jostled by the chariot-horses  
Of this woman—Pompadour.

Through the levée (poet, marquis,  
Wistful for the opening door),  
With a rippling sweep of satin,  
Sailed the queenly Pompadour.

Sighs by dozens, as she proudly  
Glides, so confident and sure,  
With her fan that breaks through halberds—  
In went Madame Pompadour.

Starving abbé, wounded marshal,  
Speculator, lean and poor,  
Cringe and shrink before the creatures  
Of this harlot Pompadour.

“Rose in Sunshine! Summer lily!”  
Cries a poet at the door,  
Squeezed and trampled by the lacqueys  
Of the witching Pompadour.

“Bathed in milk and fed on roses!”  
Sighs a pimp behind the door,  
Jammed and bullied by the courtiers  
Of this strumpet Pompadour.

“Rose of Sharon!” chants an abbé,  
Fat and with the voice of four,  
Black silk stockings soiled by varlets  
Of this Rahab Pompadour.

“Neck so swan-like—*Dea certe*,  
Fit for monarchs to adore!”  
“Clear the way!” was still the echo,  
“For this Venus—Pompadour.”

OPEN!—with the jar of thunder  
Fly the portals—clocks strike four:  
With a burst of drums and trumpets  
Come the KING AND POMPADOUR.

## Swift and the Mohawks.

[IN one of his letters to Stella, dated from Harley Street, Swift speaks with angry disgust of the nightly strages then perpetrating in London by bands of dissolute revellers, who assumed the Indian name of Mohawks, express their wildness and ferocity. From what we can gather about them, from stray passages in the Spectator" and elsewhere, it would appear that the Mohawks were in the habit of slitting the noses of poor rwant-maids, and enclosing bewildered old citizens, on their way home from their tavern clubs, in prickly rcles of sword-points, besides breaking windows with showers of halfpence, ill-treating old watchmen, pulling own shop signs, and doing other wanton and selfish mischief. In the following ballad I have confronted em with Swift.]

A BLACK sedan through Temple Bar  
Comes at the midnight chime,  
Just as above the silvering roofs  
The moon begins to climb.  
There is something stern about the place,  
And sad about the time.

That black arch rises like Death's door,  
For rebels' heads are there ;  
The moonshine, now a silver crown,  
Rests upon each in the air,  
So bright that you can see their eyes  
Upon the clear stars stare.

A grim man sits in the sedan  
That skirts St. Clement's tower  
As high aloft an angel's voice  
Is meting out the hour ;  
And on the street the moonbeams broad  
Meridian brightness shower.

Fast down the Strand the Mohawks come,  
With clash of shivering glass ;  
With bristling swords and flaming links,  
That let no watchman pass ;  
A yellow gown upon a pole  
Leads on the drunken mass.

With hurrying cries of "Scour !" and  
The revellers rush on ; ["Scour !"  
Red smoky whirls of drifting flame  
Light faces wobegone—  
Such faces only night can show,  
Day never on them shone.

"Down with the country parson's chair !"  
The drunken Mohawks shout ;  
"Unearth, old fox ! no preaching now  
Will save your bacon—out !  
Or we 'll slit your nose, and float your chair  
Down stream—now, sir, come out !"

The jostled chairmen's trembling hands  
Put down the black sedan ;  
Then out at once—wild beast from cage—  
Strides forth a black-browed man,  
Who pushes back the line of swords,  
And faces all that clan.

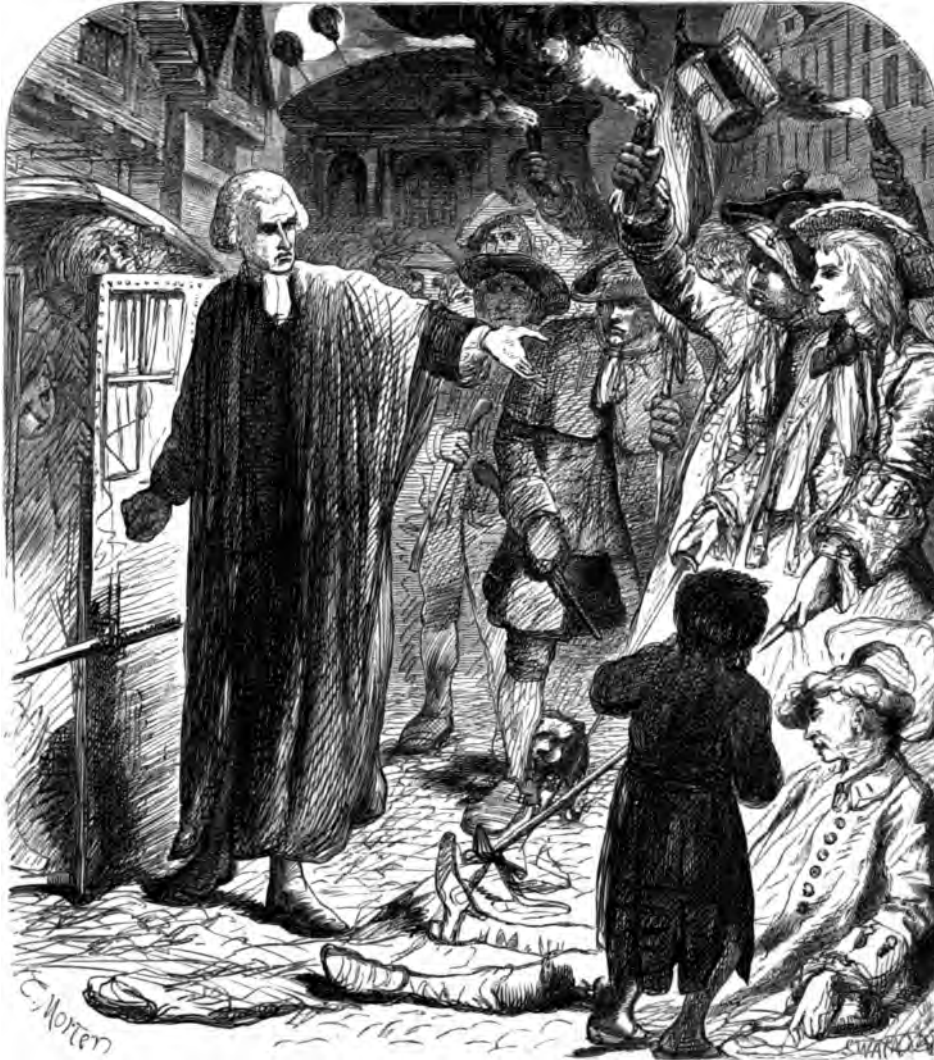
Plain, homely, in a rusty gown—  
Some village priest, no more—  
And yet á lion, and at bay,  
He daunted all the score ;  
As, all unarmed, the stern man stood,  
Backward the foremost bore.

"Begone !" he cried, "you swaggering rogues,  
You fools and knaves by fits ;  
Who let bad wine creep up and steal  
Your poor besotted wits ;  
E'en now for you the hangman works,  
And chain to collar knits !

"Back to your garrets and your dens,  
Your dice and greasy cards ;  
Back, lazy prentices and thieves,  
Back to your Bridewell wards !  
Go to the hospitals, and pine  
With Blood Bowl Alley's hordes.

*SWIFT AND THE MOHAWKS.*

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“For ye the madhouse cries and gapes,  
For ye the gibbet creaks;  
Go, join the highwayman, and kill  
The miser when he squeaks;  
Or cower around the glass-house when  
The penthouse shelter leaks.

## DR. JOHNSON'S PENANCE.

"You brood of apes, and dogs, and swine !  
Back to your kennels—go !"  
(Each bitter word that grim man spoke  
Fell like a bruising blow)  
"Spawn of the serpent, to your holes !  
He calls you from below !"

Those wine-flushed faces pale to see  
The sternness of that face ;  
The banners droop, the tankards sink,  
The cowering links give place ;  
The stuttering mouths, the vacant eyes  
Look sober for a space.

The wildest shrinks before that gaze,  
Nor dares to brave that eye ;  
Then, one by one, like snow in thaw,  
Melts all that company ;  
The swords are sheathed, the lights go out,  
Hushed is their tipsy glee.

"To Harley Street !" Swift cried, and passed,  
Humming a biting rhyme ;  
The moon, just now eclipsed, had ceased  
To soar, and soaring climb.  
There was something stern about the man,  
And sad about the time.

## Dr. Johnson's Penance.

[*"ONCE indeed I was disobedient. I refused to attend my father to Uttoxeter Market. Pride was the source of this refusal, and the remembrance of it was painful. A few years ago I desired to atone for this fault. I went to Uttoxeter in very bad weather, and stood for a considerable time, bareheaded, in the rain, on the spot where my father's stall used to stand. In contrition I stood, and I hope the penance was expiatory."*—Dr. Johnson's conversation with "Mr. Henry White, a young clergyman" in Lichfield, in 1784.—*Boswell's Life of Johnson*, vol. viii., edition 1835, page 378.]

A COUNTRY road on market-day  
(Is what I see arise),  
Crowded with farmers, ruddy men,  
Muffled up to the eyes ;  
For cold and bitter rain beats fast  
From the grey cheerless skies.

Past carts with white tilts flagging wet,  
Past knots of wrangling hinds,  
A burly man with deep-lined face,  
Chafed by the churlish winds,  
Strides on like dreary packman who  
His galling burden binds.

He wears no ruffles round his wrists,  
His wig is scorched and worn ;  
His slouching coat flaps loose and long—

Its buttons but of horn ;  
The little lace upon its cuffs  
Is frayed and soiled and torn.

It is a day of sullen cloud,  
Of shrinking leaf and flower,—  
A day the sun to shine or warm  
Has neither wish nor power ;  
So fitful falls the wavering vail  
Of the cold bitter shower.

The blackbirds from the hedges break  
In chattering dismay,  
Like wicked thoughts in sinners' minds  
When they kneel down to pray ;  
He sees them not, for darkness deep  
Bars out for him the day.

*DR. JOHNSON'S PENANCE.*

Before him black and open graves  
Seem yawning in the way ;  
The sun, a mere vast globe of jet,  
Bodes God's great wrath alway ;  
He hears strange voices on his track  
That fill him with dismay.

The black rooks o'er the fallows whirl  
Like demons in the sky,  
Watching to do some hurt to man,  
But for the sleepless eye  
Of God, that, whether day or night,  
Still baffles them from high.



The miller's waggon, dripping flour,  
Toils on, close covered in ;  
The pedlar, spite of cloak and pack,  
Is drenched unto the skin ;  
The road to Wroxeter is thronged  
With cattle crowding in.

With butting heads against the wind  
The farmers canter on,<sup>1</sup>  
(Sure corn that morning has gone down,

They look so woebegone) ;  
Till now shone out the steeple vane  
The sun has flashed upon.

'Tween strings of horses dripping wet  
The burly man strides fast ;  
On market stalls and crowded pens  
No eager look he cast ;  
He thought not of the wrangling fair,  
But of a day long past.

CHARLES LAMB AND THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPS.

He comes to where the market cross  
Stands towering o'er the stalls,  
Where on the awnings, brown and soaked,  
The rain unceasing falls ;  
Where loud the vagrant auctioneer  
With noisy clamour bawls.

He heeds not yonder rocking swings  
That laughing rustics fill,  
But gazes on one stall where sits  
A stripling, quiet and still,  
Selling his books, although the rain  
Falls ceaselessly and chill.

There, in the well-remembered place,  
He stands, head low and bare,  
Heedless of all the scoffing crowd  
Who jostle round and stare,  
Crying, "Why, lads, here's preacher man  
Come to this April Fair."

"Here's th' April Fool!" a farmer cries,  
Holding his swollen side ;  
Another clacks his whip, a third  
Begins to rail and chide,  
While salesmen cried their prices out  
And with each other vied.

Yet when he silent stood, nor moved  
For one long hour at least,  
The market women leering said,  
"This is some crazy priest  
Doing his penance,—pelt him, boys !  
Pump on the Popish thief!"

Some counting money turned to sneer ;  
One with raised hammer there  
Kept it still poised, to see the man ;  
The buyers paused to stare ;  
The farmer had to hold his dog,  
Longing to bite and tear.

As the old clock beats out the time,  
The stranger strides away,  
Past deafening groups of flocks and carts  
And many a drunken fray ;  
The sin of fifty years' agony  
That penance purged away.

Call it not superstition, friends,  
Or foolish weak regret ;  
He was a great good man, whose eyes  
With tears that day were wet ;  
'T was a brave act to crush his pride—  
Worthy of memory yet.

Charles Lamb and the Chimney-sweeps.

[OF all this great humorist's drolleries, one of the most extravagant was the supper he and some fellow-wits once gave a party of chimney-sweeps in Bartholomew Fair. He describes the feast himself in one of his essays, with irresistible and matchless quaintness. Three tables were set for the black boys among the pens, where, in spite of occasional charges of cattle, the guests contrived, amid all the fun of the fair, to bolt a barrowful of hissing sausages, and toss off countless pots of small beer. The host's fun consisted in keeping up all the forms of a ceremonious festive dinner, much to the astonishment and amusement of the black brothers. I here beg the spirit-rappers of the metropolis to apologize to the ghost of Southey for my indirect parody of his admirable "Battle of Blenheim."]

THE whirligigs swung up and down,  
The penny trumpet blew,  
Yet nought disturbed the boist'rous mirth  
Of that young sable crew—  
I know not what the month might be,  
But 't was the fair of Bartlemy.

*CHARLES LAMB AND THE CHIMNEY-SWEEPS.*

The spangled ladies' pirouettes  
Entranced the bumpkins' eyes,  
As yet unmarred by tears or blows,  
And of the natural size—  
I know not what the month might be,  
But 't was the fair of Bartlemy.

The hornpipes and the broad-sword fight  
Were sounding on each hand,  
The flabby, bragging drum tried hard  
To drown the rival band—  
I know not what the month might be,  
But 't was the fair of Bartlemy.

The cards went out a week ago,  
The festive day had come ;  
Smithfield was echoing with the sound  
Of showman's gong and drum—  
I know not what the month might be,  
But 't was the fair of Bartlemy.

The mob was singing all around ;  
You heard the Cheap Jack's shout  
Above the clamour of the quacks,  
Who duped the giddy rout—  
I know not what the month might be,  
But 't was the fair of Bartlemy.

Among the pens the seats were set,  
The sausages were hissing ;  
The fat cooks, ruddy faced, were there :  
No sable guest was missing—  
I know not what the month might be,  
But 't was the fair of Bartlemy.

The dishes all were silvery white,  
The guests all jetty black ;  
The beer was frothing in the jugs,  
Of nothing there was lack—  
I know not what the month might be,  
But 't was the fair of Bartlemy.

Jem White was "grand" that festal day,  
Watching each youngster's mouth,  
With careful eyes and ready jug  
Anticipating doubt—  
I know not what the month might be,  
But 't was the fair of Bartlemy.

And if, by chance, a sausage came  
Half-burst or underdone,  
Back to the pan he hurried it,  
Bidding the fat cook "run!"—  
I know not what the month might be,  
But 't was the fair of Bartlemy.

'T was, "Mr. Chairman, may I beg?"  
And, "Silence for the Chair!"  
And "A song from Master Rattlebrush  
To celebrate the fair"—  
I know not what the month might be,  
But 't was the fair of Bartlemy.

Oh, happy host and happy guests !  
The Golden Age again  
Come back, with love, and hope, and trust  
Exulting in its train—  
I know not what the month might be,  
But 'twas the fair of Bartlemy.

The toast went round in brimming cups,  
"The brush above the laurel,"  
"The cloth," "The gentlemen in black,"  
Then, for relief, a carol—  
I know not what the month might be,  
But 'twas the fair of Bartlemy.

'Twas very droll to see the host  
Put on the "grand monsieur."  
With "Gentlemen, I pray your leave,  
This beer, I fear is new"—  
I know not what the month might be,  
But 'twas the fair of Bartlemy.

*THE DEATH OF WINKELREID.*

---

Then how the dark boys' ivories gleamed,  
Scaring the negro night;  
They rose, the conclave, with a shout,  
Exuberant with delight!—  
I know not what the month might be,  
But 'twas the fair of Bartlemy.

Next morning, in the chilly grey,  
These urchins black were seen  
Poking their heads through chimney-pots,  
Their white teeth glist'ning clean;  
Forgetful of their feast, maybe,  
And of the fair of Bartlemy.

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*The Death of Winkelreid.*

*BATTLE OF SEMPACH, JULY 9, 1386.*

IN July, when the bees swarmed thick upon the linden tops,  
And farmers gazed with pride and joy upon their ripening crops,  
The watchmen on our tall church towers, looking t'wards Willislow,  
Saw the stacked barley in a flame, and the wheat-fields in a glow.

For Archduke Leopold had come from Zurich by the lake,  
With lance, and bow, and banner spread, a dire revenge to take.  
On Monday morning, when the dew lay bright upon the corn,  
Each man of Sempach blew alarm upon his mountain horn.

The young and old from fair Lucerne gathered to bar the way,  
The reapers threw their sickles down, and ran to join the fray;  
We knelt and prayed to Heaven for strength, crying to God aloud;  
And lo! a rainbow rising shone against a thunder-cloud.

Burghers of Berne, the lads of Schweitz, and Unterwalden's best,  
Warriors of Uri, strong as bulls, were there among the rest;  
The oldest of our mountain priests had come to fight—not pray,  
Our women only kept at home upon that battle-day.

The shepherds, sturdy wrestlers with the grim mountain bear,  
The chamois hunters, lithe and swift, mingle together there;  
Rough boatmen from the mountain lakes, and fishermen by scores;  
The children only had been left to guard the nets and oars.

The herdsmen joined us from their huts on the far mountain-side,  
Where cow-bells chimed among the pines, and far above in pride  
The granite peaks rose soaring up in snowy pinnacles,  
Past glaciers' ever-gaping jaws and vulture's citadels.



### *THE DEATH OF WINKELREID.*

The citizens of Zurich town under their banners stood,  
Their burly lances bleak and bare as any winter wood,  
Geneva sent her archers stout, and swordsmen not a few,  
And over the brave men of Berne their great town banner blew.

How fierce we ran with partisan, and axe, and spear, and sword,  
With flail, and club, and shrieking horns, upon that Austrian horde!  
But they stood silent in the sun, mocking the Switzer bear,  
Their helmets crested, beaked, and fanged, like the wild beasts that they were.



Like miners digging iron ore from some great mountain heart,  
We strove to hew, and rend, and cleave that hill of steel apart;  
But clamped like statues stood the knights in their spiked phalanx strong,  
Though our Swiss halberds, and our swords, hewed fiercely at the throng.

Hot, sharp, and thick our arrows fell upon their helmet crests,  
Keen on their visors' glaring bars, and sharp upon their breasts;  
Fierce plied our halberds at the spears, that thicker seemed to grow:  
The more we struck, more boastfully the banners seemed to blow.

### THE PHANTOM SHIPS.

---

The Austrains, square and close locked up, stood firm with threatening spears,  
Only the sterner when our bolts flew thick about their ears ;  
Our drifts of arrows blinding fell, and nailed the mail to breast,  
But e'en the dead men as they dropped were ramparts to the rest.

With furnace heat the red sun shone upon that wall of steel,  
And crimsoned every Austrain knight from helmet unto heel.  
They slew their horses where they stood, and shortened all their spears,  
Then back to back, like boars at bay, they mocked our angry cheers.

Till Winkelreid stepped forth, and said, knitting his rugged brow,  
"Out on ye, men of Zurich town! go back and tend your plough ;  
Sluggards of Berne, go hunt and fish, when danger is not nigh.  
See now how Unterwalden taught her hardy sons to die!"

Then out he rushed with head bent low ; his body, breast, and hands  
Bore down a sheaf of spears, and made a pathway for our bands.  
Four lances splintered on his brow, six shivered in his side ;  
But still he struggled fiercely on, and, shouting "Victory!" died.

Then on that broken flying rout, we Swiss, rejoicing, rushed,  
With sword, and mace, and partisan, that struck, and stabbed, and crushed ;  
Their banners beaten to the earth and all their best men slain,  
The Austrians threw away their shields and fled across the plain.

And thus our Switzerland was saved, upon that Summer's day,  
And Sempach saw rejoicing men returning from the fray.  
As we bore home brave Winkelreid a rainbow spanned our track,  
But where the Austrian rabble fled a thunderstorm rolled black.

---

### The Phantom Ships.

THE little ships, the phantom ships,  
Mere films of cloudy air,  
Go gliding past through light and shade,  
Through gleams and lustres rare ;  
Or where the moonbeam's silver path  
Sheds glory o'er the sea,  
Or where the sunbeam's splendour  
Rests in its majesty.

The little ships, the phantom ships,  
Mere tiny films of gray,  
Go sailing, sailing, past the cliffs,  
And past the frothing bay.  
Are they from East or from the West ?  
From Turkey or from Spain ?  
Or but the shadows of dream-ships  
Gliding across my brain ?



Those phantom ships, the phantom ships,  
With sailing wings spread gray,  
Flaunt forth no crimson pennons  
In chivalrous display ;  
Steer down the channel, past the shoal,  
With no rejoicing cheer,  
With no resounding cannon,  
Nor fire-flash glancing clear.

Those phantom ships are like the hopes  
Of days long since rolled by ;  
O'er dreamland seas they glide along,  
Their gray sails mounting high.  
Glide on—glide on ! ye shadowy fleet,  
And bear your dead away,  
Past glistening sands and rampart cliffs,  
And little frothing bay.

## The Pipers' Match.

*HOW FOURTEEN PIPERS PLAYED FOR THE PRIZE OF THE PIPERS' FIELD AT FIFE*

O THERE was Bob the weaver's son ;  
Mad Jock the dusty miller ;  
Daft Wat the witless, baxter born ;  
Black Rob, a laird with siller ;  
Red Ranting Tom of Cupar town,  
With Sandie Jim the ranger—  
Not many played as droll a tune,  
And never a lad a stranger.

Mad Jock began to screw his pipes  
With grim determination,  
As Tom struck up a pibroch tune  
With snorting exultation.  
Then Sandie Jim blew out the bags,  
And his bull chest inflated ;  
His chaunter's nasal squeak and twang  
Proved he was not o'errated.

They played (Get up ! what didn't they play ?)  
"The auld Wife's tapsalteerie,"  
"The Laird's Farewell," "Guide night to a',"  
And "Eh, the Gloaming's eerie !"  
"The Blood-red Feather Willie wore,"  
"The Landlord's strapping Daughter,"  
"The Blackbird's Song," "The bonny Wren,"  
And "The White Rose over the Water ;"

"Doodleum Dyke," "The Tappit Hen,"  
"The Droning dreary Weaver,"  
"The Breastknot that my Jeanie gave,"  
"The Douglas and the Riever,"  
"The merry Bells of old Dundee,"  
"The Deil and Simple Sanders,"  
My Love is like the red, red Rose,"  
And "The Fusiliers' March through Flanders."

The old wives sat around and spun,  
Their wheels raced through a chorus ;  
The old men, reeking pipe in mouth,  
Cried, "Eh, the LORD who's o'er us !"

### THE PIPERS' MATCH.

The children ran and leaped for joy,  
The grunTERS set up squeaking ;  
They stopped the dominie's harangue,  
And drowned the bethrell's speaking.

'T was morning when the pipes began,  
'T was stark night when they ended ;  
I trow that many a bag next day  
Had need to be amended.  
All through noonday the fun went on,  
Still getting hot and faster ;  
For every piper knew his art,—  
Not one but was a master.

Each player wore a wreath of leaves,  
A crown extemporaneous ;  
Each squeezed his tardy swelling bag,  
The chaunters blew spontaneous.  
The fourteen pipers played their best  
(Yes, two were undertakers) ;  
The man who played the others down  
Would win the *Forty Acres*.

If fourteen pigs were running mad,  
With fourteen butchers after,  
Such would have been the sobs and drones,  
The squeaks and eldritch laughter.  
Oh, up and down the silver keys  
Went with a lively rattle,  
That drowned the gossips' noisy clack,  
And all the children's prattle !

"Hey, Kettle Dee," the pipers played,  
And "The Bush aboon Traquair ;"  
"My Wife was a bonny wee thing," sir,  
"With the loveknot in her hair ;"  
"The Bruce's Death," and "Dumbiedykes ;"  
"Oh, down among the Barley !"  
"The Mermaid's Ballad," "Caller hoo !"  
And "The bonnie House o' Airlie."

Their voluntaries,—eh ! the likes  
Were never heard in heaven ;

*THE PIPERS' MATCH.*

---

They'd play just now as soft as birds,  
Then blazon out like seven;  
They'd bray and hiss, and snort and squeak,  
Then sham a wild bull roaring,  
And all at once spring up like larks  
Through April's sun-showers soaring.

Quick, thin and fat, the bladder-bags  
Grew every fitful minute;  
There wasn't one but you had thought  
A devil yelled within it;  
A hiss, a spurt, a jerk, a groan,  
And then a blurting screaming,  
Wild sounds as of a kelpie's dance  
Heard in a sick man's dreaming.

You've maybe heard the wedding tune,  
When in the bride comes pacing,  
And galloping each after each  
The merry notes are racing;  
You've heard the harvest dancer's song  
At midnight growing riper,—  
Double the noise, and you'll conceive  
The tumult of the piper.

How every foot went up and down,  
As in the knees were turning!  
The swollen cheeks squeezed up the eyes,—  
You'd think the keys were burning,  
So quick the whistling and the drone,  
So quick the touch and go, sir,  
As on they played, till out the moon  
Seemed all at once to blow, sir.

With music drunk, their giddy heads  
Saw all the steeples reeling;  
The floor, the wall, the stools spun round,  
And like a wheel the ceiling;  
A witch's dance, the high-backed chairs,  
The drawers and oaken table:  
The great round world was on the spin,  
And everything unstable.

### *THE PIPERS' MATCH.*

---

The torrents leapt down sixty feet  
To hear their "Maggie Lauder;"  
The rows of fir-trees in the glen,  
To the tune of "Over the Border,"  
Moved up in rank; and all the fish  
Within the brook's sweet bendings  
Sprang in the air to hear the jigs  
That circled without endings.

The air grew dark with every witch  
That had a horse to ride;  
They ringed the moon with eldritch croon,  
And yelled and screeched and cried;  
Auld Nickie Ben was at their head,  
Upon a he-goat straddling:  
A witch's broomstick is a nag  
That isn't long a-saddling.

The Brownies stole out from the barns,  
And left each flail and shovel;  
The leper, tearing rags to strips,  
Laughed from his lonely hovel;  
The fairies, like a diamond wheel,  
Spun round the mushroom tables,  
Calling their bonny nags, the bats,  
From the rat-haunted gables.

'Twas Bob the weaver droopit first,—  
His tune began to flutter;  
Then Watty dropped his tiring arm,  
And curses gan to mutter;  
'Twas quite a sight when Ranger Jim  
Threw down his gold-laced beaver,  
And cried, "The devil take the laird,  
The baxter, and the weaver!"

A thousand reels they blew away,  
Strathspeys and Tullochgorums,  
Farewells and jigs and pibroch tunes,  
With all their variorums.  
'Twas not till Sol had quite burned out  
That Rob the laird gave over;  
Then Ranting Tom blew out his bags,  
And struck up "Jock's in Clover."

## JOHN OF PADUA.

He tied a ribbon crimson red  
Unto his silver chaunter,  
And round and round the Piper's Field  
He strutted,—Oh, the ranter !

They led him home, and on his way,  
The hills of Kinlock over,  
He played the golden moon adown  
To the tune of "Jock's in Clover."

## John of Padua.

A LEGEND OF LONGLEAT.\*

JOHN of Padua duly came,  
A grave wise man with a dark pale face,  
He sat him down with a pondering brow,  
And rule and compass to plan and trace  
Each door and window, and terrace and wall,  
And the tower that should rise to crown them  
all.

Ha ! many a summer sunrise found  
Wise John at his great and patient toil,  
At his squares and circles, and legends and  
lines,  
And many a night he burnt the oil,  
Till the house with its pillared porch began  
To slowly grow in the brain of that man.

Long lines of sunny southern wall,  
With mullioned windows, row on row,  
And balustrades and parapets,  
Where the western wind should wildly blow ;  
And cresting all the vanes, to burn  
And glisten over miles of fern.

When thirteen Junes had burnt away,  
The house arose as out of a dream :  
Wide and stately, and tall and fair,

With windows to catch the sunset gleam ;  
Fifteen fair miles of subject lands  
Girdle it round where it proudly stands.

Two hundred feet of western front,  
And chapel and turret, and acres of roof,  
And porch, and staircase, and welcoming hall,  
And gate that would keep no beggar aloof ;  
Three kings had died since it began,  
And John had grown old, and pale, and wan.

One day the builder smiling sat,  
His red-lined parchments slowly rolled,  
His work was ended—the night had come—  
He bound and numbered them, fold by  
fold ;  
And sat as gravely in the sun,  
As if his toil had scarce begun.

Yes, there his life's work stately stood,  
With its shining acres of beaten lead,  
Its glittering windows, row on row,  
That centuries hence, when he was dead,  
Should shine as they were shining then—  
A landmark unto other men.

\* Longleat, the seat of the Marquis of Bath, situated on the borders of Wiltshire, is a beautiful example of the Italian architecture of the Elizabethan age. It took some forty years in building, cost a fabulous sum of money, and was the work of John, an architect of Padua, who also built old Somerset House.



*JOHN OF PADUA.*



And there were the long white terraces,  
And the great wide porch, like an open hand  
Stretched out to welcome, and the tower  
That rose like a fountain o'er the land;  
And the great elms bosoming round the walls,  
The singing birds' green citadels.

TINTORETTO.

They found him there when daybreak came,  
In the self-same posture, self-same place,  
But the plans had dropped from his thin wan hands,  
A frozen smile was on his face ;  
And when they spoke no word he said,  
For John of Padua sat there—*dead*.

Tintoretto.

(SCENE: VENICE. TIME: THE PLAGUE YEAR.)

SLOW, underneath the Casa d'Oro's wall,  
Three searchers and three peering shadows  
came,  
Before them and behind them lurked the night,  
Save where the torches' wavering yellow  
flame  
Blew backwards, lighting up the stony face  
Of some street statue, or a crucifix :  
There was no sound, save where, upon a step,  
The water lipped, black as the sluggish  
Styx.

Like disappointed thieves, they sullen shrunk  
To where there sat upon the water-stair,  
Resting one foot upon a piled-up boat,  
A man, wrapped all in black, his tangled  
hair  
Hid half his face, who,—crying, "Why ! you  
leave

Your work half done ;"—chid rough and  
angrily ;  
"Rogues, did not Francia say that Tintoret,  
The painter, had a daughter dead? go see."

Half growling and half mocking, the three  
knaves

Leaped from the stair into the laden-boat,  
Joining their master. "Time was made for  
slaves,"

Cried one in jest : "let the dead woman  
wait."

And then they quenched each torch, and thrust  
the bark  
Into the fuller tide and Lido way,  
Turned the boat's head, and, roaring out a  
song,  
They passed,—those searchers, with their  
ghastly prey.

Alone, in the barred-up and silent house,  
Before whose padlocked door a watchman  
paced,  
Sat one beside a bed—the curtains closed,—  
Brooding entranced ; a picture, half erased,  
Before him on the easel ; palette, brush,  
Upon the floor ; one lamp, against the wall,  
Cast flickering shadows on the tapestry  
Of the great palace doorway, wide and tall.

All on a sudden Tintoretto rose,  
The haggard, bearded man, so worn and  
pale,  
And tore the curtains back, and set the lamp  
By the dead face, and raised the veil  
That hid her features, now so saintly calm,  
And, with a madman's wild and fevered  
haste,  
Renewed the task that wrung him to the heart,  
Muttering, as swiftly the fierce lines he  
traced,

*TINTORETTO.*

“That Titian’s still before me in the race ;  
 The harpies snatch this angel from my side,  
 And leave *his* proud-eyed girl, with lavish  
 hair  
 And great white shoulders, to enhance his  
 pride,

And serve round sweetmeats to the senators,  
 Who flock to him by dozens, to hand down  
 To ages, heedless of the boon, each vacant  
 face,  
 Steeped in one dull dark fog of golden  
 brown.



“He fills the churches, palaces, and halls ;  
 ’Tis he who sweeps the ducats to his lap.  
 He paints the Emperors, Cardinals, and  
 Popes ;  
 To him the meanest boatman doffs his cap.  
 Out on the cunning, envious, wily hunks !  
 But quick to work before those wretches  
 come,  
 At the first light, to steal my angel hence,  
 And tear my darling from her father’s  
 home.

“Death took my Lisa first,—’t was half my  
 life ;  
 And now Maria, her own self again,  
 My hope and solace, my sweet singing-bird,  
 The soother of my long and bitter pain,  
 The sun of this old house, the ceaseless  
 joy  
 Of this whole quarter, very saint and queen,  
 Pure as the lily in the virgin’s hand.  
 How calm she lies, how still, and how  
 serene !

HOW LADY BLANCHE ARUNDEL HELD WARDOUR FOR KING CHARLES.

"Yet, we shall meet in Paradise, and there  
She'll smile to see St. Luke my wrinkled  
hand  
Grasp at the golden gate, while Titian takes  
The lower seat. I have him on the hip.  
That hour will pay for all past checks and  
spurns ;  
God grant it dawn, and soon, yes, very soon.  
Maria *cara*, bid St. Jerome come  
To see my masterpiece : God grant this  
boon.

"There I shall see my martyrs and my saints,  
Ranged in their circles all to welcome me.  
Maria *cara*, they will bring a crown  
For thy old father,—Immortality  
Is won at last ! Stop, the cold cobalt light  
Streams through the curtains on my dead  
child's bed."  
There was a wrenching at the padlocked door,  
And loud arose the cry,—"*Bring out your  
dead !*"

How Lady Blanche Arundel held Wardour for  
King Charles.

I.

THE First of May, the garland day, that ushers in the Spring,  
Saw Wardour Castle fair and strong in arms for Charles the King ;  
The elms were black with noisy rooks, the meadows gilt with flowers,  
With rosary of blossoms, Time counted the dying hours.

The butler moved his casks about, the chaplain was at bowls,  
The grooms were hissing in the stalls, the boys played with the foals,  
The Lady Blanche among her maids was busy as the best,  
Unconscious that the carrion-crow was hovering o'er her nest.

All suddenly a group of us, upon an outer wall,  
Was startled by a warning shout from those within the hall,  
And down the wind-tossed avenue, from out a storm of dust,  
Galloped a wounded serving-man, whose helmet was all rust.

One—two—then three, poor frightened knaves, with faces gashed and torn,  
One with a broken sword red-wet, who screamed upon a horn ;  
And then a rout of flying men groaning and very white,  
Each swearing, as he hoped for grace, Cromwell would come that night.

That night our scouts were pouring in, each paler than the last,  
The shepherds brought us news of Strode, and many a troop they'd passed  
A moment Lady Blanche turned pale, but soon flushed angry red,  
To think old England's golden crown should deck a brewer's head.

*HOW LADY BLANCHE ARUNDEL HELD WARDOUR FOR KING CHARLES.*

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All night the melting lead was poured into our bullet-moulds,  
The rusty pikes were lifted down from the long ratchet-holds,  
Great stones were piled upon each ledge, the guns were duly scoured,  
Upon the highest tower our flag of angry challenge lowered.

*HOW LADY BLANCHE ARUNDEL HELD WARDOUR FOR KING CHARLES.*

The falconets were double charged in every bartizan,  
Ready to shower their fiery lead on frowning Puritan;  
And every one got out his scarf and plume to ready be,  
For gallant face brave men should wear when danger's on the lee.

The chaplain on his cassocked knees a rusty breast-plate scoured;  
The butler, in a pluméd hat, above all others towered;  
The very turnspit marched about, with gun and partizan,  
As noisy with his threats and oaths as any serving-man.

II.

Oh, never daisy wore a frill more trim or yet more white,  
No primrose of the early Spring was purer to the sight:  
The fleecy clouds of Summer dawn move with such stately grace,  
Unchanging morning sunshine shone from out her pretty face.

No fawn trips so, no mountain roe a lighter footprint leaves;  
The violet loved to have her tread upon its purple leaves;  
Before her gentle presence birds ceased not their carolling;  
She shed a tranquil joy on all, as does the early Spring.

She never chid her serving-maids about their tapestry;  
And yet, of all that busy hive, she was the fair Queen Bee.  
For idleness, or ribaldry, or drunken revelling sport,  
Dared never e'en to set a foot within the inner court.

She was as gentle as a dove brooding upon its nest;  
Yet when that evil news with shrieks came sweeping from the west,  
And pale-faced fools were pouring in with news of deadly harm,  
She changed at once—a sudden storm broke flashing from that calm.

Her husband and her lord had gone unto the tented field,  
To wring from stone-faced Puritans what Puritans would yield;  
She was alone without a friend, yet never thought of fear,  
For gathered in her castle walls was food for seven year.

III.

That sullen night, just at the dusk, from out those dark fir-trees  
A muffled drum, with mournful throb, sounded upon the breeze;  
And dark and slow the Puritans began their leaguer then,  
Not in the open manly way of honest gentlemen.

They burnt our stacks, they fired our barns, they harried us all day;  
At night they poured the hot shot in where we stood firm at bay.  
They scorched our walls, they blackened doors, they splintered roof and pane,  
But to the brave old trusty place no entrance could they gain.

*HOW LADY BLANCHE ARUNDEL HELD WARDOUR FOR KING CHARLES.*

---

Our massy walls laughed out to see that grim and yellow host  
Spur round and round old Wardour's towers, like couriers riding post.  
Their pikes were thirsting for our blood, yet we were snug and warm,—  
All under Wardour's battlements were safe from every storm.

One day a pale-faced trumpeter the rebel dogs sent in,  
The gall and bile were oozing through his scurvy sallow skin ;  
He bade us all surrender to this Cromwell, "England's lord :"  
The women were to go in peace ; the men, yield to the sword.

Then Lady Blanche tore up the roll, and trod it underfoot ;  
We drove the crop-ear from the gate, with scoffing laugh and hoot ;  
We crushed his trumpet, snapped his staff, and set the dogs at him :  
Ha ! but for Lady Blanche's grace they'd torn him limb from limb.

Their swords smote blunt upon our steel, and keen upon our buff,  
Till coldest-blooded man of us had battering enough ;  
'Twas butt and butt, and point and point, and eager pike to pike,  
'Twas foin and parry, give and take, as long as we could strike.

There, in the breach stood Lady Blanche, a banner in her hand,  
Urging us on with voice and look to scourge this currish band.  
She stood amid the fire and flame in the red gap of the wall,  
An angel sent to comfort us—the bravest of us all.

They thinned our ranks, they kept us there in arms by night and day,  
Till, oozing out in drops, our strength began to melt away.  
We fell asleep while taking food, we scarce had power to load,  
Yet even then our Lady's voice woke us as with a goad.

The fire-balls vexed us night and day, their mines shook down a tower,  
Their bullets upon door and roof fell in unpitying shower ;  
At last, on specious promises of mercy to us all,  
Our Lady Blanche hung out a flag of white upon the wall.

They burnt our stables, stole our deer, caught all our fattest carp ;  
They felled the old oaks in the park with axes keen and sharp ;  
Unearthed our leaden conduit-pipes, and melted them in bars ;  
Tore our great pictures into strips, and split the floors in stars.

This was the way the Rebel Dogs a sacred treaty kept ;  
Yet God had not forgotten us, nor had His justice slept ;  
For that day week Newcastle's "Lambs" fell on this lying rout,  
Shot, piked, and sabred half the troop, and burnt the others out.

## The Witches' Ride.

COME, come, gossips, now mount, now  
mount—

Mount, mount, gossips, and spur away.  
Brown bog-rushes, or broom, or crutch,  
We've far to ride ere the break of day.

Will-o'-the-Wisp has flickered and shone  
Three times over my drowned babe's grave;  
'T is time, my gossips, 't is time to go,  
The moon is glittering bright on the wave.

Here our sisters come, two and two,  
The air is alive with their widening ranks;  
Let the seamen beware the sunken shoals,  
And the surf that lashes the weltering banks.

Queen Moon rides on, Queen Moon rides on,  
Where the thin white rack is gliding;  
We will chase our lady, all through the night,  
On our horses that need no chiding.

The clouds, like dragons, and camels, and apes,  
Will be shouldering round and following;  
Hark! over our heads the jet-black owl  
To the snow-white owl is halloaing.

Under our feet the tossing sea  
Is under the mad wind shouting;  
Oh! woe betide the Fifeshire bark  
That our mocking light is doubting.

We'll ride fast after our lady the moon,  
Till Edinbro' yonder grows small as your  
hand,  
The steeples no bigger than crisping-pins,  
And a long white strip the Bamboro' land.

Back, ere the dawn, while the town is dim,  
With the pennons of smoke all blowing one  
way;  
When the stars slink in, and the moon grows  
pale,  
When the sun still sleeps, and the clouds  
are grey.

Come, come, gossips, the steeds are here,  
And we've far to cross into bonny France;  
We fear no shaft in the southern land,  
No guard can stop us with sword or lance.

We'll halt by the way, a knife to toss  
Through the murderer's window, to tempt  
him more;  
And we'll drop a rope near the gambler's  
bed,—  
It will serve his turn when the game is o'er.

See how the corpse-lights leap and dance!  
Shining to guide us to horse, to horse;  
Now then, gossips, we'll mount at once—  
For the churchyard ghosts are out in force.

We'll brew the storms, and we'll cast the fires,  
That shall wreck and burn, and smite and slay;  
King Satan will smile to hear of our work—  
Mount, sisters! we've much to do ere day.





## The Last Witch-Burning.

AT FORFAR, JUNE —, 17—.

THERE was a swoon of yellow cloud,  
A scud of wind-tossed blue,  
A drift of vapour, crimson proud,  
Shot purple through and through,  
Then a scurl of the greys of a wild-dove's wing  
With shifting pearly hue.

At Forfar, on a bright June eve  
(The sun in blazoned pride),  
They led old Elspeth to the stake,  
Her withered hands both tied ;  
They brought her with a blast of pipes,  
As men bring home a bride.

The pointing children hooted her,  
Even the beggar's bitch  
Bit at her as she trembling went  
To die—"the poisoning witch."  
Patched cloaks flocked with soft scarlet hoods :  
The poor as well as rich.

They struck her as men do a thief,  
Pelting the blackening mud ;  
They would not stay to file the bridge,  
But dragged her through the flood.  
Old palsied hags from windows screamed,  
Longing to drink her blood.

Looking across the fields you saw  
Black lines, that widened out,  
Of ploughmen running ; on the wind  
Came curse, and groan, and shout :  
But, GOD ! to hear no single sob  
Or sigh from all that rout !

She gasped for mercy. Ask the dog  
To spare the strangling life  
That in the vixen moans and barks  
Deep in the tumbling strife ;  
Or ask the Indian Chief to give  
Mercy when blood is rife.

Old Elspeth, with her lean arms crossed  
Humbly upon her breast,  
Walks painfully with bleeding feet,  
A rope strains round her chest ;  
Sickly her watery eyes upturn  
To the gallows farther west.

Her coif is off, her ragged hair,  
Snow-streaked with wintry years,  
Floats out when any gust of wind  
Brings billowing storms of cheers ;  
The rolling mob still screech and roar,  
No bloodshot eye drops tears.

She kissed a Bible,—close she kept  
The volume to her lips ;  
Oh ! then arose a flame of yells  
As when war's red eclipse  
Passes. The leaping hangman then  
Cried out for "stronger whips."

Yet all this time the mounting larks  
Sang far from human toil,—  
Miles, miles around the ripening corn  
Was in a golden boil ;  
The bee upon the blue flower swung  
In restless, happy moil.

With stolid care across the moor  
The distant death-bell rung,  
And, drowning it, five thousand screamed  
The ribald dirge that's sung  
When the great King Devil has his own,  
And another witch is hung.

'T was pitiful to see them bind  
Those shrunk limbs to the stake ;  
Her idiot sisters' thankful smiles  
Approve the pains they take,  
And all the cruel, mocking care  
With which the sticks they break.

## THE YOUNG QUEEN-WIFE.

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A calcined collar round her neck  
The hard-faced hangman fits,  
An iron chain around her waist  
And round her ankles knits,  
As ready for the fire his man  
The beech log cleaves and splits.

They thrust the cruel arrowy flame  
Into the billet heaps,  
Its fiery, serpent quivering tongues  
Make eager, hungry leaps ;  
See the poor creature stretch her hands  
To warm them. No one weeps !

The savage tiger fire is lit,  
A thunder-cloud of smoke,  
In one ribbed column tall and black,  
Rose thirty feet, then broke :  
It blotted out the setting sun  
As with a burial cloak.

You heard from thickness of the cloud .  
The mumble of a prayer,  
And lo ! a shriek, swift, dagger keen,  
Sprang up and stabbed the air,  
Then just one burning hand that strove  
To wave and beckon there.

A silence came upon the crowd,  
As when the softening Spring  
Breaks up the icy Northern seas,  
Melting ring after ring :

Then, rising o'er their guilty heads,  
The lark sought Heaven's King.

Was it the sinner's pleading soul  
That rose up to those skies,  
High, high above the burning light  
And sea of brutal eyes,  
The storms and eddies round the stake  
Of brutal wild-beast cries ?

\* \* \* \*

An hour ago ! Now but a ring  
Of ashes silvery white,  
And filmy sparks that broke in blooms  
Of fitful scarlet light,  
When scudding winds, with fiery gush,  
Drove the children left and right.

And chief amongst the staring crowd  
A child laughed with those bands—  
She was the maid the hag bewitched  
Upon the laird's own lands ;  
And when she saw the ash blow red  
She clapped her little hands.

Thank God, the frightened, cruel folk  
Ne'er lit that fire again ;  
None wore that calcined collar more,  
With its griping, throttling strain :—  
'T was a cruel deed, and only sweet  
To the bigot's blighted brain.

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## The Young Queen-Wife.

HOW MARGARET OF NAVARRE DISPORTED IN THE LOUVRE GARDENS.

THE fountain gods in marble strength  
Struggle through mists of silvery water ;  
All round the yellow blossoms press,  
Turning the crystal gold. O daughter

Of France, the darling of the sun,  
Thou Valois, royal, proud, and fair,  
See how the swan, with arching neck,  
Casts snowy shadows everywhere.

*THE YOUNG QUEEN-WIFE.*

Ha ! when they hear her satin rustle,  
The golden shoals of Indian fish  
Leap to the surface, lover-like,  
Anticipating beauty's wish.

She shakes her jewel-glittering fan,—  
They disappear beneath the lilies,  
Turning as quick as dragon-flies,  
As fickle-swift as Arab fillies.



O see with what a sweet caprice  
Queen Margaret runs to race the swallow,  
By courtly nodding poplar-trees,  
Or through the laurels in the hollow ;

And now with pretty angry haste  
She flies her little Persian hawk,  
Gold jesses on, at butterflys  
That skim the level terrace-walk.

THE YOUNG QUEEN-WIFE.

Then throws herself with witching grace  
Upon the mossy violet bank,  
And laughs to swooning at the page  
Claiming the jester's bells and rank ;  
Now mounts her dappled palfrey, which  
She governs with a silver thread,  
A rope of pearls about her breast,  
A Venice tiring on her head.

A tilt with rushes ! How she swerves  
In madcap caracoles, and turns  
Around the pompous Chamberlain,  
Until his flap-ear tingling burns ;  
Then strikes, with wanton page's whip,  
The piebald jester Bobinel,  
Or at the snowy rings of doves  
Fires off her Milan petronel.

The fair young wife ! her merry blood  
Rose effervescing like champagne ;  
She laughed when sullen Coligny  
Told her how hard it was to reign—  
How hard to share a monarch's joys,  
And yet escape a monarch's sins ;  
She, mocking says, " Our Admiral  
Thinks much too crabbedly of things.

" Be this Queen Margaret's decree :  
I will, throughout our sunny France,  
In every pot a capon boil,  
To light the fire break pike and lance ;  
I banish every sullen face—  
Let all who love their Margot smile—  
Perpetual sunshine I command,  
Believing melancholy guile."

To humour her, a herald page  
Blew three times on a silver horn ;  
And all cried, " Viva Marguerite !  
*The Rose, the Rose without a thorn !*"  
She, laughing, bowing, stroked her hawk,  
And bade them saddle for the chase,  
Trying her crossbow lock—serene  
Her candid brow, her happy face.

She was the gayest, maddest thing,  
As full of gambols as a fawn—  
Born some May morn, and sunbeam fed,  
Child of the sunshine and the dawn.  
To see her, when the poet took  
His pen to write a canzonet,  
Lean languidly against the vase,  
Beside the Psyche grandly set !

Even the Chancellor grew glad  
When she would call him to the dance,  
Or with a blossom, playful tossed,  
Awoke him from a moody trance.  
Her laugh was good as book and bell  
To scare all evil things away ;  
Whene'er she came, she seemed to chase  
One-half the shadows from the day.

A living carmine dyed her cheek—  
Her bosom was the sunniest snow—  
A lily, Summer-tinged, her neck—  
Ivory white her swelling brow.  
Oh, she was beautiful !—her skin  
Was soft as rose-leaves—fie ! her hand  
Was white as April's purest cloud—  
She was fit Queen for Dian's band !

Blue eyes she had, so soft, and filled  
With such a swimming, dancing light,  
They shed a glory when they beamed,  
Star-like and excellently bright.  
A Venice tiring, edged with pearls,  
Arched o'er her forehead like a wreath ;—  
What lapidary's angled stone  
Could match the eyes that shone beneath ?

Just now—eyes sparkling with fun—  
She bade them shower the flower-leaves o'er  
her ;  
A Flora crowned, she stood to hear  
Old Ronsard touch his " Mandragora "—  
The *Sleep Song*, that he made to lull  
His mistress, whom his serenade  
Had woke too rudely—sweet it was  
To hear a lute so deftly played.

### A HINDOO LEGEND.

And now this Juno, still in bud,  
Proud gathers up her satin train,  
Laughing to scorn old Coligny  
Telling a Valois how to reign ;—

Maulevrier passing through an arch  
Of flowers still dripping with the dew,  
Whispers, "*The Admiral will know more  
By next year's St. Bartholomew.*"

### A Hindoo Legend.

UNDER the shadow of a tree—  
A tamarind-tree—the Krishna played.  
His mother's hut was very near ;  
Upon the roof the flickering shade,  
Netted with sunshine, cheerful spread.  
The earthen drum was sounding there,  
The market flag was fluttering red  
High o'er the crowded village square.  
'T was noon, and in the swamps' deep fens  
The buffaloes were wallowing ;  
Torpid within their jungle dens  
The tigers, gorged, were all asleep.  
Even the feather-grass was still,  
The lotus-flowers had closed their eyes,  
The palm-tree waved not on the hill.  
The little Krishna in his play  
Some milk had from a temple taken.  
His brothers ran and told the deed,  
Thinking the Krishna Heaven-forsaken.  
The angry mother eager ran  
To seize the thief and all his clan ;  
And hurrying with a wrathful speed,  
She found him by the temple gate.  
He sank upon his knees and blushed,

And bent before the rod too late,  
Still that foul sacrilege denying.  
"Open your mouth, nor, Krishna, prate ;  
Your breath will show that you are lying."  
His mouth he opened angrily :  
"There, mother, now I pray thee see."—  
She looked into his mouth so dark,  
And saw, with awe and ecstasy,  
Rising up slowly, spark by spark,  
Like bubbling fire through the Summer  
wave,  
Like golden flowers from a holy grave,  
The three worlds and the seven seas,  
The stars above the mount of heaven,  
The guardian gods on the elephants,  
Bright Meru's nectar-flowing founts.  
The mighty tortoise that on its back  
Poises the earth, and the floating rack,  
All rolling thro' the deep blue gloom  
As it will roll till the day of doom.  
Then prostrate at the Krishna's feet  
His mother fell, now contrite, weak ;  
And hailed him Lord of Earth and Heaven,  
Of the three worlds and oceans seven.



## A Dream of the East.

I OFTEN dream I'm sitting, when the daylight is fast flitting,  
In a lattice-windowed chamber looking out upon a court ;  
And in that Eastern room there is rising through the gloom  
A little bubbling fountain, that dances in its sport.

That stately Orient chamber is walled with golden amber,  
And at my back the cushions are striped with purple silk ;  
My turban is of green, and my shoes are red, I ween,  
And my kaftan, like my mantle, is as white as camel's milk.

There, resting after labour, beside me is my sabre—  
A crescent of keen steel, with a hilt of precious stone ;  
And I hear the Nubians' laughter, and the joke it follows after,  
As I doze in state and listen while I day-dream all alone.

And the spacious room is filled with a vapour that's distilled  
From a silver perfume vessel that is standing near the door ;  
And I see the citron's blossom, as the light winds kiss and toss them,  
And I hear the distant murmur like the waves upon the shore.

That's my children and their mothers, and many dozen others,  
In the bath-room and the garden, the seraglio and kiosk ;  
And while the day is closing, and I am here reposing,  
The Moolahs are now lighting the lamps in yonder mosque.

The water-clock is chiming, with a measured silvery timing,  
And a dripping, tinkling, dimpling, very pleasant to the ear ;  
And the violet sherbét in a silver bowl is set  
On a little stool of ivory that is stationed very near.

Now, to-night I am in clover, for the toils of state are over,—  
No courier's come, and Samarcand may sleep or may rebel ;  
All Persia is at rest, and the rising in the West  
I can strangle when I wish, with one strong grip of my hand.

But as even Sultan's leisure ceases sometimes to be pleasure,  
I arise, and calm and gravely clap three times my royal hands ;  
And quickly Dinerzade and the fair Schehezerade  
Come and seat themselves beside me, and obey my high commands.

*A DREAM OF THE EAST.*

---

O'er my visions I see looming, through the pale blue smoke-wreaths glooming,  
Curling from the fiery apex of a fragrant old cigar,  
Calenders and stern magicians, brown and bearded old physicians,  
Kings half marble, ladies fairer than the opening balsam far.

Now Aladdin, cold and trembling, as, so wily and dissembling,  
On the fire the swarth magician sprinkles incense and perfume ;  
Till the desert valley shakes, and the earth beneath them quakes,  
And he sees the trees of jewels and the subterranean gloom:

Next I see him pale and pining, in his eagerness for dining,  
Rubbing the old lamp so battered, with a handful of rough sand ;  
When, to rouse his fear and wonder, come the genii amid thunder,  
Bearing silver cups and vessels to their master's royal hand.

Then at dawn I watch him staring, open mouth, and fixed eyes, glaring  
At the palace that the Afrits built for him of molten gold,  
At the precious stones that flame round the windows' diamond frame,  
And the hangings of rich damask looped up, costly fold on fold.

Presently the story changes, and anon my fancy ranges :  
Ali Baba's slily watching, snugly nestled in a tree,  
When the Forty Thieves appearing, ride by, on their steeds careering ;  
And the cavern portal widens to the "Open, sesame !"

Then comes artful Cogia Hassan, that detestable assassin,  
Marking doors with chalk, and spying, watching early, watching late,  
Till the Forty robbers, hid underneath the oil-jar lid,  
Are stifled, drowned, or stabbed—a well-deservéd fate.

Then the little hunchback's gambling, which soon sets the tailor ambling,  
Till the cruel, choking fish-bone stops the revel and the dance ;  
Then the tumult and the fear, in the city far and near,  
Till the barber wakes him quickly, from his deep, alarming trance.

Or in Cashmere I am walking, with a Persian dervish talking,  
When the magic horse is carried out into the palace square,  
And the negro, grim and black, leaps upon the charger's back,  
And with a hoarse mocking "farewell," flies aloft into the air.

Very soon he is beheaded, and, through storm-cloud safely threaded,  
Comes the hero with his princess hurrying joyful home again ;  
And a merry clash of cymbals, and a vibrating of timbrels,  
Ends with joy and noisy welcome all the bitter hours of pain.

*THE VIZIER'S PARROT.*

Then is crafty Sindbad flying, on the roc's back safely lying,  
Till, the Diamond Valley reaching, he unties the knotted band;  
Gropes about, the gems collecting, not a moment recollecting  
That he's in a magic circle, girt with snakes on every hand.

Then the fisherman I'm eyeing, who his eager casts is trying,  
Till he draws the copper vessel, sealed with lead, unto the shore,  
And from it now there is arising a mighty form of size surprising,  
Which by Solomon was prisoned twice twelve hundred years or more.

But cigars burn soon to ashes, and I ring a bell that dashes  
All my visions and dream-castles into air, from whence they came;  
Then comes in the urn hot steaming, that ends all my pleasant dreaming,  
And as I pound the sleeping coals, up starts the wakening flame.

*The Vizier's Parrot.*

THE Caliph Haroun gave his Vizier Ali  
An Indian parrot, green and scarlet-winged,  
A bird of wisdom, once King Hownynama's;  
Its filmy eyes were all with wrinkles ringed:  
With gravity befitting a royal bird,  
It ate and talked, and watched the coming  
finger,  
Holding its head awry to catch the voice  
Of every laughing slave or passing singer.

The women of the harem called the bird  
"King Red-Cloak," for a bright flamingo  
colour  
Was half its plumage; and its beak a dagger  
Of curious curve—it needed Rustum's valour  
To face its bite; peach, almond, fig, or apple,  
It would dissect with calm consideration.  
It was of wondrous age, and, if it chose,  
Could have revealed the lore of many a na-  
tion.

It was the rarest mimic: dog or ape,  
Raven or child, or eunuch it could follow,

Just like an echo, giving every sound,  
Or whisper, shout or scream, or cry or hallo,  
With a droll twinkle of its beady eyes,  
And rocking change of foot, and fluttering,  
—Spiteful and humorous, goblin-like and  
quaint—  
Of its green plumage and its crimson wing.

One day the Caliph came, the Vizier gone  
To hunt the leopard, and sat down beside  
Red-Mantle's cage, with sugared fruits and  
cakes

To tempt the Indian bird, that listening eyed  
The turbaned man that muttered the Koran  
(His former master), with a wistful look,  
And soon began to chatter o'er his hoard  
Like moolah mumbling o'er a sacred book.

Not his old sayings, but his newest chat,  
Gathered in the divan; the secrets hidden  
From all but it,—some inklings of a plot,  
But too apparent to that guest unbidden:



*THE VIZIER'S PARROT.*



"The knife or bowstring!" "Tyrants must be slain,  
Or they will slay us!" "Dead men tell no tales."  
"This very night after the hunting, mind,  
Strike all together." "Death to those who fail!"

## THE CHASE OF THE SIREN.

The Caliph, brooding, listened ; then arose,  
And to his palace slow and silent went,  
Musing o'er what he'd heard, and tracking out  
The parrot's prattle with a stern intent. . . . .  
At sunset came the Vizier to his bath,  
And, as he raised the curtain, met a hand,  
Bony and strong, that closed upon his throat,  
And choked his life out by Haroun's command.

## The Chase of the Siren.

A DORIC LEGEND.

AGES past a Doric village  
Heard at night a spirit summons,  
Sounding over wood and commons,  
Over fallow, rock, and tillage,  
Waking all the rustic sleepers,  
Weary with the toil of tillage.

For that music shook the branches,  
From their clay nests woke the thrushes ;  
Where the brook thro' fern-leaves gushes—  
Brook that Summer scarcely stanches ;  
Woke the bird whose endless sorrow  
Rest, nor years, nor absence stanches.

Watchmen by the gate's barred portal  
Woke and heard the spirit calling,  
As the chill night-dew was falling.  
"Lo !" they said, "'t is an Immortal  
Come to bless our new-built temple—  
Now the moonbeam strikes its portal."

Dusky faces, over doorways,  
Peered into the moonshine quiet,  
Thinking it some rustic riot  
Of god Pan, who often plays  
To the Bacchantes in the midnight,  
All dark through, so they but praise.

Hark ! it rises and it hovers  
Where the dew, so fresh and gleaming,  
Like a diamond treasure beaming,  
Studs the rose-flowers, dear to lovers.  
Can it be a wandering Siren  
Luring Dryads from their lovers ?

Now a bird returning seaward,  
Then it moaneth like the dying ;  
Now it clamours like the flying  
Of a host fierce driven seaward ;  
Then there comes a sound of pinions  
As of creatures winging seaward.

Floats through ilex-boughs that tangle,  
Where moss banks the violets cover,  
Where the amorous night-moths hover,  
By the brooks that playful wrangle,  
Washing round the roots of beeches,  
Where the water-courses jangle.

Now it seems a pæan holy  
Keeping cadence to the beating  
Of the wild Fauns' golden cymbals,  
When their blood the wine is heating,  
When the lambs burn on the turf,  
And the worshippers are meeting.



Hearing it, the green-mailed adder  
From the bramble woods came creeping,  
Then the tortoise from its sleeping  
Slowly woke, and loud and madder  
Howled the wolf, as if tormented  
By those sounds that cheered all other—  
Sounds that Echo answered sadder.

*THE CHASE OF THE SIREN.*

Now it passes to'ards the village,  
In between the wattled houses,  
And each drowsy shepherd rouses.  
Faces stare out on the tillage,  
Thinking that some God were coming,  
Or the light-armed hot for pillage.

Then the young men of the shepherds  
Hearing it, leapt from their pallets—  
Rose from hovel, loft, and garrets.  
Swift and strong as angry leopards,  
Out into the moonlit forest,  
Hurried all the enchanted shepherds.

How their strong limbs shone like marble  
In the moonshine—silver burning ;  
Never thought they of returning—  
(Why should I the fable garble?)—  
Bold they ran, and lithe and sturdy,  
With their broad chests white as marble.

Past the little Doric temple,  
Past the grotto of the Nymph,  
Where so crystal dripped the lymph,  
O'er the plain so broad and ample,  
Ran each madman lured to ruin  
By his fellow-fool's example.

Such a strain of back and shoulder,  
Such a flood of eager faces,  
Throwing by his crook each races ;  
Sinew strung with courage bolder,  
Every pliant muscle straining—  
Garments blowing from each shoulder.

In the silver rolling river,  
Fierce they breast the angry billows,  
Where droop all the mournful willows,  
Where old aspens shake and quiver ;  
Still beyond them ran the music,  
Luring them across the river.

All the maidens knelt, still praying  
From afar for those their lovers—  
Then still sweeter far it hovers—  
Comes the music to them praying ;  
Vain the wailing supplication,  
Not one runner is delaying.

For the madmen run but faster—  
Evil led and evil seeking—  
Caring not for wife or maiden,  
Caring not for child or master,  
All their hope is on the Siren,  
Could they struggle on but faster.

Down a blue gorge of the mountain  
All that wild chase swept and vanished—  
Slowly the last runner vanished.  
Then arose, high as a fountain,  
Such a scream of hopeless anguish  
That it seemed to rend the mountain.

Ne'er returned those spirit-seekers—  
They were sought by wood and hollow,  
Where the goat's foot scarce could follow ;  
Wine was poured from golden beakers,  
Incense burnt and fatlings offered,  
But in vain,—lost spirit-seekers !

Some said that it was a Siren  
Who had left her emerald hollow  
To lure such as these to follow,  
Through all dangers that environ,  
To her home amidst the surges,  
For she hates man—does the Siren.





### The Madman of Corinth.

THERE was a Corinth merchant, as mad as mad could be :  
He beat his wife, and struck his child ; and his ruthless savagery  
Did not abate till he came and sat on a hill above the sea.

A calm fell on his fevered brain, and he grew patient then,  
As he sat and watched the haven, afar from other men,  
And the gulf spread blue and sapphire clear before his steadier ken.

Forgot the oboli all spent, the purple robes all sold,  
As he saw the triremes sailing forth, shaking out fold by fold  
Their canvas to the north-west wind, that blew keen, fresh, and cold.

There day by day he sat and watched, until he dreamed they went  
For him, those stately argosies with spreading white sails bent,  
For gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, and nard and spikenard sent.

Whene'er he saw the parting ships, he clapped his withered hands,  
And waved his ragged robe and staff, and screamed his royal commands.  
And ordered forth "more sail, more sail!" to eastern, western lands.

*THE MADMAN OF CORINTH.*

At sunset, too, when ocean deep seemed glowing all on fire,  
He shouted from the grassy cliffs, and mounting higher, higher,  
Blessed all the ships returning, from Sicily or Tyre.

For him the balsam-laden barks came down the gulfs in fleets;  
For him the bustle and the din of Corinth's crowded streets;  
For him each wave upon the stones of quay and harbour beats.

Too zealous friends from Galen came across the Tyrrhene deep:  
They purged his brains with hellebore, and woke him from that sleep,  
And drove away those wild fierce thoughts that through a frenzy creep;

Until he, pining, sat forlorn all day upon the hill,  
Crying, "Alas! my honest friends, I know you meant no ill;  
But still, instead of saving me, you only came to kill."

Illusions are like coloured clouds that move and veer o'erhead,  
With iris changes gay and swift, transient and fancy-fed;  
Without them, earth is but a grave, and life the dross of lead.





*The Cumæan Sibyl.*

I.

KING TARQUIN sat beside the open door,  
Looking towards Soracte, as the west

*THE CUMÆAN SYBIL.*

Streamed forth its crimson on the marble  
floor,  
Reddening the broidered bands upon his  
vest,  
The gold that bound his brow and sandals  
rimmed ;  
With a rich vintage splendour deluging,  
The sunset filled from out its vase-like  
globe  
The new-built palace of the Roman  
King.

II.

It crimsoned the white marble temple  
walls,  
And turned the Tiber to a stream of  
blood,  
Boding Rome's future : Romulus's shield  
Shone not more ruby than that rolling  
flood  
The sun incarnadined ; as from the west,  
Out of that splendour gliding calm and  
slow,  
There moved a figure with a hooded face,  
That passed into the dark from out the  
glow.

III.

A priestess, she had come with sacred books,  
That Roman wealth may buy ; but, cold  
and hard,  
Tarquin with mocking smile smote on his  
sword,  
And struck the ground to call his body-  
guard,  
And spurned the scrolls the Sibyl humbly  
laid  
Upon the floor. " Begone, thou witch !"  
he cried,  
" Three hundred pieces of our hard-won  
gold ?  
Hag, dotard, hence ! or we will tame thy  
pride."

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IV.

Sunset once more, and Tarquin's Volscian  
slaves  
Toiled at the ramparts of the temple hill ;  
Again through boding bars of crimson light  
The Sibyl came, and grave and proudly  
still  
Proffered the books ; but only four were  
left ;  
Still the same price she asked. The King  
arose  
To strike the beldam with his dagger-heft,  
And from his presence drive her forth  
with blows.

V.

Another twilight, and again she came  
Gliding from out the brightness without  
sound.  
Only three books were left ; the envious fire  
Had shrunk the precious hoard. Two  
Gabiens bound  
Cowered before scornful Tarquin's all-con-  
suming wrath ;  
The Sibyl laid the books upon his throne,  
Drew her thick hood over her wrinkled face,  
And stood like Niobe new turned to  
stone.

VI.

" Lost opportunities," exclaimed a sage,  
" Have voices for the wise ; beware, O  
King,  
Lest you reject the presents of the Gods :  
From pride alone one-half life's sorrows  
spring."  
Then Tarquin bent, and from an ivory chest  
Scooped out two handfuls of the Volscian  
gold,  
And threw it to the Sibyl ; slow her hand  
Hid it within her mantle's dusky fold.



THE AVATAR OF ZEUS.

VII.

Then gliding to the shadow of the wall,—  
Shadow that swiftly widened,—she became,  
E'en as they gazed, a blurred and shapeless fog,  
Tinged here and there with glimmer of a flame,  
Such as the sunset leaves in the dim west  
Cresting the Sabine Hills; then flickering low  
Like the marsh fire at sunrise, it grew dark  
Throughout all Rome, save on one shrine below.

The Avatar of Zeus.

A KING sat high on his ivory seat,  
Girt with his sages and priests—each one;  
Wrapped in his purple and gold he shone,  
As the great sun shines when the day has  
begun.  
His crown was crested with seven stars,  
His sceptre blazed like a rod of fire,  
In a flood of snow his grey beard fell:  
"T is Zeus," they cried, "the round world's  
sire."

That moment, through the jostling crowd  
Of kneeling suitors, a god-like man  
Strode,—where he moved he clove a way,  
"A shipwrecked stranger!" the murmur ran.  
He kissed the cheek of the beggar child;  
He halved his fruit with the leper brood;  
He spurned the parasite's ready knee;  
He frowned on the bad, and he smiled on  
the good.

Careless he passed through the royal gate,  
Where the flute-players played their Lydian  
hymns.

He waited not where the Scythian slaves  
Were oiling their scarred huge brawny  
limbs.  
But he sought the green turf altar raised  
To the Gods, in the pious days of old,  
And he threw a garland upon the stone,  
And knelt, with an offering of gold.

Then the king arose in his rage and wrath,  
And tore his robe, and stamped, and cried,  
"Ho! spearmen! seize this wandering man;  
Is our royal throne to be thus defied?—  
Shall all Greece kneel to the Basileus,  
And not this poor barbarian slave?—  
Ho! there, bring cords and rods to chide  
This impious rogue, this cheat, this knave!"

That moment shuddering thunders broke  
From out the old Rhodopian Hills:  
Blood-colour turned th' eclipsing sun,  
With blood flowed down the mountain rills.  
Dread voices came from earth and sea,  
The strong oaks groaned from east to west.  
All knelt but one;—*there shone a light!*  
"The God! the God!" he stood confessed.

*THE AVATAR OF ZEUS.*

Then the king arose and broke his staff,  
Threw his gold crown on the gateway sand,  
Tore fierce his purple, rent in twain  
His royal robe, and raised his hand.

"Behold!" he cried, "great Zeus hath come!  
Lead him, ye slaves, to my ivory throne;  
Dropped from the clouds, or cast by the wave,  
He hath come but to claim what is his  
own."



But the God had passed: they sought him not,  
For the crowd soon turned to its foolish  
mirth.

They said that it was but a dream—a trick—  
A vision-witch sent to vex the earth,—

So that the king's pride grew to still greater  
pitch,

And his crimes increased, till a stripling lad  
Smote him one day as he sat on his throne;  
Then Thrace was freed, and Greece was glad.

## Hylas.

[HYLAS was a beautiful Grecian youth who accompanied Hercules in the Argonautic expedition. While stooping down to fill his pitcher, at a river of Bithynia, he was dragged in by the Nymphs, and heard of no more among men.]

I SING of the dancing feet,  
I sing of the white arms wreathing,  
I sing of the song so sweet  
That the River Nymphs were breathing,  
When Hylas bounded down,  
Through the sunbeams on the mountain,  
And stooped to twine a crown  
Of the rush-flowers by the fountain.  
Ha! ha! ha! laughed the rill,  
And the Satyr laughed his fill,  
And the yellow flowers, and the wandering breeze,  
Laughed from the purple hill.  
"Beware!" cried the Dryads from the boughs,  
Whose leaves were never still.

He plucked a murmuring reed,  
And fashioned a flute like Pan's,  
Laughed to find music in a weed,  
And clapped his snow-white hands.  
He aped the coo of the dove,  
That broods in the greenwood dark,  
And he mimicked the joy and love  
Of Phœbus' bird—the lark.  
Ha! ha! ha! laughed the rill, &c.

He piped like a quail in the corn,  
When it hears the reapers' rout;  
He aped the mirth from the harvest borne,  
And mimicked the reapers' shout;  
He screamed as the seamews scream  
O'er the drowned men on the shore,  
Then piped a hymn to the stars that gleam  
O'er the billows that leap and roar.  
Ha! ha! ha! laughed the rill, &c.

The nook was so dusk and dim,  
That the nightingale sang all day,  
And the breeze it whispered its every whim  
To the shadows asleep that lay;  
And the cypress waved on high,  
Shutting out the prying sun,  
And the stars of the midnight sky  
Were barred out every one.  
Ha! ha! ha! laughed the rill, &c.

And the bird on the sunset bough  
Hushed when it heard his flute,  
And the very breeze from the mountain brow  
Grew gradually mute.  
But the river would not cease  
Its low soft undertone,  
But still to itself went whispering peace,  
As it flowed o'er rock and stone.  
Ha! ha! ha! laughed the rill, &c.

"Who was it spoke my name?  
Dove in the wood, 't was thou,  
There, for I heard.—It came  
From the bird on the poplar bough."  
"O Hylas, shun the river,  
For the Nymphs are hiding there,  
Yon where the trailing willows shiver  
In the sunset's golden air."  
Ha! ha! ha! laughed the rill, &c.

"Birds for the fowler fear  
But nothing scares the brave;  
Zeus to the good is near,  
On land and in the wave."  
Too late to Zeus he cries,  
For the Nymphs have borne him off,  
And the only sound that fills the skies  
Is the shouting Satyr's scoff.  
Ha! ha! ha! laughed the rill, &c.

## Pan Vincus—Pan Victor.

### I.

PAN sat blowing his pipe of reeds,  
Where the ferns branched over him,  
And the sun's great orb of burning gold  
Was hid by an oak's huge limb :  
He piped to the Fauns and the Nymphs  
unseen,  
And the Dryads hiding the boughs between,  
In that fir wood mossy and dim.

### II.

He sat and played on his magic pipe  
Under the fir-tree's odorous cones :  
The nightingales with envy heard  
The wealth of those deep, rich tones,  
Fluting, gurgling, trilling, thrilling,  
All the woods with music filling,  
Cheering the Gods on their thrones.

### III.

The sunshine played round his laughing face,  
The shadows crept to his feet,  
The birds came fluttering round the boughs  
To hear that song so sweet,  
Flowing, rippling, fluttering, rising,  
Or with a gladdening joy surprising,  
As of a cymbal beat.

### IV.

The mole crept up to listen and mark,  
The squirrel stole down to hear,  
For joy the very fish in the stream  
Were leaping far and near,  
As the pipe was breathing softly, lowly,  
Now soaring swift, now sinking slowly,  
With a mirth that laughed at fear.

### V.

Two hunters, tracking a wounded stag,  
Came peeping through the trees,  
With pursed-up mouths and hands to their  
ears,  
To catch and question the breeze :  
They heard the pipe, like a wild bird singing,  
Pour out its pure and silvery ringing,  
As they stealthily couched on their knees.

### VI.

They leaped out fierce on the heedless Pan,  
With bow-strings bound his hands ;  
They led him back to the little town,  
Followed by boors in bands.  
Loosing him then, they set him playing,  
And the notes went soaring, fluttering, sway-  
ing  
Over the stubble lands.

### VII.

Then the fishermen threw down their spangled  
nets,  
And the vineyard men their knives,  
And slaves came running to hear the song,  
With the youths, and children, and wives,  
As the notes went gushing and bubbling forth,  
With echoes that answered from south to  
north,  
As thick as bees from their hives.

### VIII.

"Brain him !" cried out a butcher's slave ;  
While a priest whispered "Sacrifice ;"  
And a murderous thirst for the Satyr's blood  
Reddened the fishermen's eyes.  
But still the music went rippling on,  
The glad notes chasing the glad notes gone,  
Like runners seeking a prize.

*PAN VINCTUS—PAN VICTOR.*



IX.

Then Pan blew a longer, wilder note,  
Till the fir woods stirred and shook,

THE SEARCH OF CERES FOR PROSERPINE.

Then there came a rush of hairy hoofs  
Down the banks and over the brook.  
And still the pipe went murmuring,  
As the stream bursts forth from its mountain  
spring :  
There were Satyrs in every nook !

x.

And on with a lusty shout they came,  
Clashing cymbals with might and main,  
Waving sheep-crooks in homage rude,  
Dancing welcome over the plain ;

And still their monarch sat still and played,  
By neither priest nor slave dismayed,  
Nor by their threatening train.

xI.

Then Pan, in his anger, changed those men  
To aspens, and such poor shivering trees,  
And ever since they have stood by that town  
Trembling to every fitful breeze,  
As if that pipe was murmuring still,  
Sending its magic o'er plain and hill,  
O'er rivers, rocks, and leas.

The Search of Ceres for Proserpine.

[WHEN Pluto carried off Proserpine, as she was gathering flowers in the Vale of Enna, Ceres lit a torch at the flames of Ætna, and sought for her through the world.]

THE black pines of Hermes' chasms  
Toss the white snow from their branches,  
Now that hush the thunder-spasms,  
And its dark rain winter stanches ;  
Where from mosses oozing, weeping,  
Leap the rivers swift as leopards,  
Down the crags that shadow sleeping,  
Wrapp'd in wolf-skins, the arm'd shepherds,  
Where the glittering snow-peaks shine,  
Ceres seeks for Proserpine.

Where from Ætna's cliff Asopus  
Hurries, singing in his glee,  
Louder than the swift Eurotas,  
Glad as slave just broken free,  
Singing like a rambling truant,  
Shouting an unceasing pæan,  
Through the meads its waters fluent  
Hurry to the bright Ægean ;  
There past olive and past vine,  
Ceres seeks for Proserpine.

Where on Parnes blossom flowers,  
And the wild boar whets its tusches,  
Where 'mid rocks and ivy bowers,  
From its cave the river rushes ;  
Where the bees 'upon the heather  
Murmur like a nation praying,  
Singing, singing all together,  
For the latest sunbeam staying ;  
Where the olive-branches twine,  
Ceres seeks for Proserpine.

Down Caïster swans are floating,  
Struggling through the pliant reeds,  
And the hovering hawk is gloating  
O'er the cygnet as it feeds ;  
Where the bladed flags are bending,  
Like Narcissus, o'er the stream,  
Watching with a joy unending  
In the wave their blossoms gleam ;  
By those waters hyaline  
Ceres seeks for Proserpine.



Where round the Symplegades  
Like wild beasts the waves are roaring,

*THE BOY MARTYR.*

---

Or above the Cyclades  
The sea-eagle's restless soaring ;  
Where her monsters Scylla's driving,  
As the tempest howls in madness,

And the dying seaman's striving  
To clutch fast the reef in sadness,  
O'er the sands that gleam and shine,  
Ceres seeks for Proserpine.

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*The Boy Martyr.*

*NERO IMPERATOR.*

I.

NOW that the bull with gilded horns was stricken by the priest,  
The arena swam with human blood and with the blood of beast ;  
The tigers felled, the leopards stabbed, the huge snakes mashed to death :  
Resting awhile to fan themselves, the multitude takes breath.

High up above the curtain-roof the great white-rose clouds blew,  
High up above the circling seats the whirling pigeons flew ;  
Below in arching shadows cool the children hide and play,—  
No warning growl, nor hiss, nor moan can Roman boy dismay.

The sand is levelled smooth and dry, the babble once more swells,  
The gladiators cut and gashed are resting in their cells,  
The tridents and the gory nets, the axes and the swords,  
Are lying in a dusty heap beside the hooks and cords.

The people laugh ;—the senator, the juggler, and the mime,  
The cobbler and the augur's man, the actors jest and rhyme ;  
The bath slaves and the soldiers sit shouldering seat by seat,  
The drover and the fisherman, the thief and boxer meet.

The mountain palaces of Rome, the Forum's busy walks,  
Have sent their wicked thousands here, and each of bloodshed talks ;  
The Tiber's bare, the temple's shut, the baths are empty all,  
There only is one sleeping slave in Cæsar's golden hall.

The purple awning overhead, three acres Tyrian wove,  
Flaps breezily as Auster now whispers with breath of love ;



*THE BOY MARTYR.*

And Nèro, tired, leans back to rest on his great ivory seat,  
His robe unloosed, his pimps and slaves basking around his feet.

Not one of all those thousands there thought of the death-doomed men  
Who lay—hands bound—with bleeding backs in subterranean den;  
Nor of that little Christian boy, brought from the chalky shore,  
Where Dorobernium's fort looks down upon the channel's roar.



Weary of pleasure was the Plebs, weary the Cæsar too,  
In vain the slaves from swaying roof rain the sweet-scented dew;  
The gladiators, quaffing draughts of myrrh and Sabine wine,  
Felt that a gloom was on the Plebs, and dread the fatal sign.

For storms had kept the corn fleet back, the Plebs was hard to please,  
From Cæsar to the meanest churl, not one seemed at his ease;  
All day the thumbs had been turned down, howe'er a man might fight,  
For hungry folks are sour and sad, and full of spleen and spite.

## THE BOY MARTYR.

---

They murmur for some newer thing, some combination wild,  
A snake and wild cat, or a cub, to grapple with a child;  
Or ostriches and antelopes—here Nero rose and cried  
For some fresh combat—man and beast—that ne'er had yet been tried.

### II.

The lituus and the tuba roar, the soldiers' drums resound,  
The Nubian cymbals clash and chime the amphitheatre round,  
As open fly a dozen doors, and robed in red, and blue,  
The gladiators doomed to death come pacing two and two.

With shining limbs and faces bruised, and strong arms white with scars,  
The cestus-wearers march, and sing their noisy hymns to Mars;  
The netters and the light-armed lads, the agile targeteers,  
Syrian and Greek, Arab and Gaul, heedless of hiss or cheers.

But, lo! a whisper: Nero stands, and waves his Lydian lyre,  
Made of Parnassus laurel-wood, and strung with golden wire;  
Again the gladiators pass through the Vomitory's door,  
And the dull arena's ring of blood is silent as before.

What Libyan lions now with manes drifting upon the sand,  
With lolling tongues and stealthy walk, till chafed by blow and brand;  
Or German bears to gore and rush, chasing the bleeding man;  
Or mighty snakes to wind and leap as only such things can?

But, no! an Epicure's surprise—voluptuous cruelty!—  
A Briton's child to struggle with a thief from Thessaly,  
A brawny giant scarred and burnt, covered with dust and blood,  
His feet all red as vineyard men's with the grapes' purple flood.

The boy was pale with dungeon gloom, yet was he still and stern,  
Smiling at bony Death, who shook o'er him a funeral urn;  
His father dead, his brothers slaves, his town burnt to the ground,  
His tribe destroyed, his country lost, his mother chained and bound.

The horns and drums and shrieking flutes burst forth together now:  
The giant swung his trident round and wiped his crimson brow;  
David when trampling on the bear looked like that Christian youth,  
With such a halo on his face of holy love and truth.

The Pagan Gods frown on the Greek, his blows are fierce but wild,  
Slowly his heart yields up its life unto this mere weak child;  
He strikes with giant force, but, lo! he bites the gory sand,  
The unfleshed trident snaps and falls from the dead giant's hand.

### A TARTAR FORAY.

---

The people raise their thumbs erect, of mercy the glad sign;  
Nero stands up and waves his wands that like the sunbeams shine:  
"Curse CHRIST and live, O boy!" he cried. The lad looked up,  
Pushing fierce back with angry hand the flatterer's proffered cup.

"Curse CHRIST and live!" ten thousand cried—and twenty thousand then.  
The boy put one foot on the dead, and braved the howling men;  
"CHRIST and His cross alone!" he shouted, pallid, but stern and cool;  
Then Nero rose, and screaming cried, "To the lions with this fool!"

A roar—a leap—a shaking snarl, an angry growl and tear,  
A gnash of gory teeth, a wave of bloody dripping hair,  
A dreadful shriek that rose above the shouts of countless men,  
As Moorish gladiators drove the beast back to his den.

Sudden the death, and yet that boy had time one glance to see  
Of the golden gates of Paradise opening silently.  
And beckoning hands, and snowy wings, and odours as of balm;  
Then storm and darkness sudden changed to an eternal calm.

The mountain ant-hill's on the move—the people rise to go,  
Through all the arches, from each bench, the human rivers flow;  
Nero, forgetting crime so small, drove to his golden home,—  
*But GOD did not forget it—no—GO LOOK YE NOW AT ROME.*

---

### A Tartar Foray.

A TARTAR foray:—swarms of horse,  
Grim, bearded faces, flashing swords,  
Wild cries of "Pillage!" "Burn!" and "Slay!"  
As swept o'er Persian bounds the hordes.

Rude standards, strips of crimson silk,  
With Koran texts, long lines of spears,  
All bending eastward; through scared towns,  
They ride with curses and with cheers.

And in their rear the captives come—  
Pale wounded men, and maid, and child,

Pricked on with lances, till their blood  
Left trails to lure the wolf o' the wild.

They rode back laden with spoil and wealth  
Great gold vessels from Ispahan;  
And their choicest prize was a Persian bride,  
Who rode at the back of a Calmuck man;

A broad-limbed slave, who groomed the horse  
Of the Tartar chief, and pitched his tent;  
Who drove his camels and ground his sword,  
And guarded his lord where'er he went.

*A TARTAR FORAY.*

A mere wild beast, with an apish head,  
And a heart as hard as the granite stone;  
One who had stabbed, and slashed, and cleft  
A dozen men that day alone.

And yet he had thoughts of home and child,  
And love for a daughter so fair and young;  
And he gave a word to cheer the slave—  
A kindly word, though in rugged tongue.



They had not ridden a dozen miles,  
Ere the bride implored him, with weeping  
eyes,  
To spare her the shame of a lingering death,  
And the horrors of sinful miseries.

The Calmuck turned, and with pitying look,  
Drew a knife from his girdled side;  
And slew at a stroke, though he dared not look,  
She who besought him—the Persian bride.

Another mile; the avengers came  
Swooping like hawks before the wind;  
And they broke swift into the Calmuck  
hordes,  
And smote in front, and smote behind.

And foremost rode the Persian chief,  
To leap among the robbers flying—  
He clasped his bride with eager arms:  
He'd saved her, but he'd saved her DYING.



## The Wood Echo.

A GREEK LEGEND.

OLD PAN still lives amid the woods,  
 "Shaping reeds?" I know not whether,  
 Watching where the raven croaks,  
 Or idly stripping a jay's feather.

16

Hark ! I'll question him,—*"Hei, Pan !*

*Hei, Pan !*

Ho, Pan !—*Ho, Pan !*" Now together—  
 Hear his deep voice shout "*together !*"

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BAUCIS AND PHILEMON.

Old the giant is, and bent  
With the cares of years gone by ;  
He wails the old Gods long since dead,  
Blind he gazes at the sky.  
Hear his answer,—“ All must die !  
Hei, Pan !  
*Hei, Pan ! Ho, Pan ! Ho, Pan !—All must die !*”

He hides deep in the sloping woods,  
Where the beech-leaves drift and spread,  
Where the fir-cones sway and swing,  
Where the trees are brazen red.  
No, he never sleeps !—“ Why, Pan !  
*Why, Pan !*  
Hei, Pan ! *Hei, Pan !* Hei, Pan !—*Why, Pan !*”

Far across the rippled lake,  
Where the moon is bright and high,  
He sits beneath the riven oak,  
The last God left beneath the sky.  
Now I'll rouse him.—“ Hark ye, Pan !  
*Hark ye, Pan !*  
Hallo, Pan ! why, you must die !”  
Hear his mocking—“ *You must die !*”

You laugh—he laughs. On the watch  
Ever for an answer right,  
Quick the giant's hoarse reply—  
“ Ha ! ha ! *ha ! ha !*”—“ Pan, good night !”  
Garrulous he's not. “ Good night !  
Good night !”  
Hear his courtesy,—“ *Good night !*”

Baucis and Philemon.

(A LEGEND OF AN ENGLISH WORKHOUSE.)

I.

WHAT does it matter whether Giles or Styles  
(The name is not material to the story)?  
Some years ago there was an old, old pair,  
With time, not trouble, bent and bowed and  
hoary.  
In a trim cottage overrun with flowers,  
They'd lived for forty years of sun and showers.

II.

Outside the door, the well-thatched hives were  
set,  
And bees with busy angry eagerness  
Ransacked the honeyed hollyhocks for toll,  
Still dreading winter's pinching meagreness.  
The vine to the old walls did fondly cling,  
To no croft oftener came the birds to sing.

III.

On the white threshold loved the cat to doze  
(A humble type of calm and quiet content),  
Within were peace and holy happiness,  
As e'er of yore beneath the patriarch's tent,  
The poplars wavered by the roadside there,  
As if to warn away all woe and care.

IV.

But hard times came, the wolf was at the door  
With gnashing jaws — that gaunt wolf  
Poverty,  
And Sickness halted in with livid face,  
And Hope fled bleeding from armed misery.  
There are but two retreats that beggars crave,  
The parish workhouse and the pauper's grave.

*BAUCIS AND PHILEMON.*

v.

They left that cottage (as the first pair left  
Their withering Eden), silent, full of tears,  
And slowly took their solitary way,  
Mocked by a gibing mob of cruel fears,  
And at the workhouse gate with clasped  
hands,  
Parted for ever "by the law's commands."

vi.

No, not for ever! Duly once a week,  
When the sad pauper prisoners came to  
pray  
In the dull chapel-room, barred like a gaol,  
And scarcely lit by the dull sun's dim ray,  
They saw each other for one little space.—  
What though they gazed upon each other's  
face,

vii.

It was a weekly death to part again,  
Yet while the droning voices mumbled  
on,  
They sat and joined their hands across the  
aisle,  
As in the happy days for ever gone.  
The angels looking from their homes above,  
Smiled on that pure, imperishable love.

viii.

How could it last? those long and dreary  
hours  
The prison clock doled out were hours of  
pain,  
That sordid crowd could never yield a friend;  
Their hearts grew chill—a weight was on  
each brain:  
The quiet home, so peaceful and so neat,  
Brute Poverty had trod beneath its feet.

ix.

Almost together—but a week apart,  
The old folks died, unpitied and unwept;  
Eternal calm upon each dead face came,  
A calm—majestic as on kings that slept.  
Strange that the jargon of the doctor's art  
Disdains to classify "the broken heart."

x.

But e'en the grave did not unite the two:  
Apart they lay beneath the rank green grass,  
In the damp churchyard's coldest, dreariest  
place,  
The same black yew-tree shadowed them.  
Alas!  
The poor have but few mourners, yet the dew  
Hung in big tears on flowers that o'er them  
grew.

xi.

When last I saw their quiet, humble graves,  
A shower was sprinkling on the turfen mounds,  
And there rose from the blossoming orchard trees  
A pleasant harmony of mingling sounds,  
And then a rainbow coloured the white sky,  
As 'twere the gate of heaven opening silently.



## In my Gondola.

WHERE high above the silent street  
The Campanile springs,  
Where round St. Mark's the angels still  
Poise their unfaded wings,  
I in my floating hearse dream on  
While my old boatman sings.

Quick to that lonely Jesuit church  
Where the bronze charger stands ;  
To that old house—a palace once,  
Now spoiled by Austrian hands—  
Its marbles rent by heat and cold,  
Ill clamped with rusty bands.

Oh, not to-day the painting-school,  
Where dusky Titians glow,  
And where Bellini's jewelled saints  
All congregate below.  
No, not to-day the chapel dim,  
Half-lit by silver lamps,  
Nor that old Doge's nameless tomb,  
Defaced by carking damp.

I go to muse away an hour  
O'er glories dead and past,  
O'er pride dethroned by cruel Time,  
That rude Iconoclast.  
Oh, how this city, Ocean's Queen,  
Is beggared now at last !

I pace the rooms where tapestry  
Still boasts its faded kings ;  
Where, quaint and querulous with age,  
The old Custode sings,  
And feebly tries to reach the web  
Where the lean spider clings.

I seek the Council-room, whose walls  
Are stamped with globes and stars,  
And where above the throne of State,  
Still glowers a painted Mars.

Out on that curséd Austrian drum,  
Beneath the window-bars !

I love the chapel, though no priest  
Bends at the shrine, now bare,  
No starry candles glimmer bright  
Through the dim balmy air ;  
And yet a halo seems to shine  
Round the one picture there.

Here once the Mocenigo lived,  
Aping a royal pride,  
His golden wealth flashed lustre down  
Upon the passing tide,  
His purple gondolas, long since  
A Tyrian glory dyed,

The fount still plashes day by day  
Upon the old stained floor,  
Where stones turn emerald in the beams  
That through the vine-leaves pour ;  
It ever falls, yet can't efface  
One blot of human gore.

There's blood upon the agate steps  
And on the marble stair,  
Where the quick lizard flits across,  
Fearing the very air.  
A bad man's conscience knew such fears,  
Long centuries since, just there.

It was a day of proud content :  
The Adriatic's tide  
Had just received the ring that joined  
The bridegroom to the bride ;  
The golden barge with sails of silk  
Moved homeward o'er the tide ;

The streets were full of silken cloaks,  
With gems the windows shone :



*IN MY GONDOLA.*



The poorest fishing girl that day  
Her bridal dress had on ;  
Flags shook from every roof—the bells  
All day had madly gone.

*IN MY GONDOLA.*

Fresh from his prayers beneath the dome,  
The perfumes on his cloak,  
Here the Doge sat, and heard the wave  
Moan as if one had spoke ;  
And thought of how the gory rack  
Those pale lean limbs had broke.

Thought of the Giant Stairs, where one  
Knelt down awhile to pray,  
Then stood erect and eyed the crowd  
Like a royal stag at bay,  
And smiled on doves that o'er him flew  
To some isle far away.

He thought of that well-chamber, where  
A groaning man did lie,  
And of the burning roof, where one  
Prepared himself to die.  
And e'en the strangler's burly knave  
Had tear-drops in his eye.

Or dreamt of the Great Chamber where  
The Forty bend and write,  
Smiling so grimly when they hear  
The brawny headsman smite.—  
His dream was broken by a star,  
That flashed across the night.

Slow past the marble stairs he saw  
A roll of paper float,  
Dropped by that sable gondolier  
That turns yon corner—note  
How pale his face turns—"Doge, beware!"  
Upon his vision smote.

That night a deep and stifled cry  
Rose to a window grate.  
The morning came ; they found a plume  
Beside the water-gate ;  
A letter torn, some drops of blood.  
The Doge had fled—too late !

Now back, old sturdy gondolier,  
My dream has passed away ;  
Back with my floating hearse, and quick,  
Before that dying ray  
Leave the last roof, and darkness pall  
The dead corpse of the day.

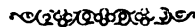
The doves upon the copper dome  
Flutter at my wild cry,  
Now that I see yon saints look up  
Devoutly to the sky ;  
Where CHRIST upon a golden throne  
Is robed and crowned on high.

Yon pillars brave old Dandolo  
Brought from the Asian shore ;  
Those are the brazen steeds the Greeks  
Bridled in days of yore ;  
Yonder the wingéd lion tries  
From his stone chains to soar.

But slaves sleep on the church's steps ;  
Slaves snore in every boat ;  
Slaves' songs at night along the tide  
On these free breezes float ;  
Slaves stab and gamble in the square,  
And tear poor Freedom's throat.

The dead were great ; their puny sons,  
Unworthy such a home,  
Laugh, sing, and sleep beneath the shade  
Cast by their giant dome,  
Slaves of the butcher and the priest—  
Of Austria and of Rome.

Hark ! now the brutal German drum  
Leads on the bayonets. See  
Insolent soldiers pacing round  
A city once so free.  
Rise, hero of yon lonely isle,  
And give them liberty.



## A Christmas Scene at Rome.

THE RIVAL PIFFERARI.

I.

OUR Lady of Seven Sorrows—Hush !  
(Paolo, man, why the deuce do you push ?)  
Seven poniards meet in her breast.  
Queen of Angels, she's now at rest.  
There are the sbirri spying about,  
Ready to snap us, there's not a doubt,  
If we or the Mattei draw a knife,  
These Romans think so much of a life.

II.

Mary, Mother ! smile now and then  
On us, the poor Abruzzi men.  
Star of Heaven, shine graciously !—  
Why, there's old Matteo's whelp I see,  
Sneering at Beppo's peacock feather,  
And the hole in his jacket of untann'd leather.  
Th' impenitent thief had such a face—  
I wish we were in a quieter place.

III.

Holy Saint Simon ! look at him now !  
For half a paul I'd give him a blow.  
See how he's tossing his rosary,  
*Cospetto !* in gibe and in mockery.  
And there are the devil's younger kin  
Piping away through thick and thin  
To out-play us—faster, louder :  
I wish I'd my gun and a little powder.

IV.

Shout out our hymn to Paul and Peter :  
Never stop for the special metre.  
Carlo, the beasts are looking this way ;  
Giacomo, didn't I tell you ?—Pray !  
Can't Onofrio people sing  
As well as Matteo's underling ?  
Down to the image of Mary Mother !  
Here come Luigi and his brother.

V.

Now we are strong enough at last.  
Filippo, the time for the Ave's past.  
Snatch old Matteo's bagpipe, lad,  
It's sure to make the whole lot mad.  
Throw it to me. I stamp on it.—There !  
Let them gibber, we none of us care.  
Giacomo, now for a steady stab,—  
I've got him down on the fountain slab.

VI.

Matteo's grappling with Paolo yonder.  
Holy Father ! who'll beat, I wonder.  
Saints be thanked, the old man groans !  
That's right—dash him upon the stones.  
*Bene, bene !* that is the dig  
To let the heart's-blood out of the pig.  
Slip off, *fratelli !* I hear a drum,  
And quick, before the Zouaves come.

---

## Ready Mabel's Rovers.

I.

MOUNT PLEASANT'S wide-spread terraces were radiant in the sun,  
The flowers their dewdrop coronets were wearing, every one,

*LADY MABEL'S LOVERS.*

---

Uncrowned, yet with a royal train, did Lady Mabel pace,  
The gentle morning sunshine shone softly on her face.

Fair and stately rose Mount Pleasant (by a Tudor king 't was reared),  
There the Dacres once held revel, each one loved and each one feared ;  
O'er the woods, by Autumn gilded, gazed the royal turrets down,  
To the friendly with a greeting, to the foeman with a frown.

There were gables rose-encumbered, cross-paned windows ribbed with stone,  
Scutcheoned doors, embrasured niches, chimneys to the swallows known,  
Gilded weathercocks that circled restlessly to every wind,  
Fickle as a lady's favour, changeful as a woman's mind.

The sunny porch bore "1500," carved in letters long and quaint ;  
The chapel had its western windows guarded by full many a saint ;  
Past the gatehouse spread the gardens, girt by marble statues round,  
Where the yew-tree's sable hedges by rich belts of flowers were bound.

Farther still, the great deer forest reared its emerald walls on high,  
Beneath the calm broad river wandered, sapphire blue as summer sky ;  
In the distance, past the ploughmen, mill and smithy, park and stile,  
Crept the high road, white and glaring, winding on mile after mile.

II.

Half a dozen silken suitors followed pretty Lady Mabel,  
Smirking, simpering, bowing, prating, past each oriel and gable,  
Waving plumes and fluttering satins—one alone, now three, then two,  
They paced the lozenge-paven terrace, by the close-clipped walls of yew.

Young Sir Roger Wildrake Fenton, rich in fallow, moor, and fen ;  
Old Sir Francis, proud and stately, with his well filled park and pen ;  
Then the Welsh knight, Griffith Wynkin, rather curved about the leg,  
Bragging coarsely of his stables, and his brown mare, "Little Meg."

Next to them Sir Brian Bulstrode, fiery red about the face ;  
Then that lawyer, Master Vellums, proud of money, not of race ;  
Last of all that noisy fopling, Marmaduke Macgillivray,  
Talking nonsense, or loud ranting lines from Shirley's latest play.

One was fixing firm his feather, with a shrill uneasy laugh ;  
One his scented glove was pulling, or was tying up his scarf ;  
One was stooping, gay adjusting fluttering ribbons at his knee,  
Or was merry, disentangling chains and badges two or three.

*LADY MABEL'S LOVERS.*



One proposed more cups of clary ; one cried out to "boot and horse ;"  
The lawyer he was recommending "no eviction, if by force ;"  
The fop was picking clove carnations for the Lady Mabel's hair,  
Vowing by "Sir Phœbus' chariot" that she was "excelling fair."

### *LADY MABEL'S LOVERS.*

---

Far behind them, lone and musing, sober-garbed and very sad,  
Paced a poet-student, sunken-cheeked and thin : the lad  
By his mistress was unnoticed, by the pages held at scorn :  
He stood upon that terrace-walk the unhappiest creature born.

Careless the lady paced, her train borne up by twice three pages ;  
The falcon on her little wrist fretted in pretty wanton rages.  
One cord of pearls alone she wore, twisted around her hair ;  
Whene'er she moved a breath of Spring filled all the amorous air.

Vain the sighs of "Queen and Goddess," "Dian chaste," as "Dian cold,"  
Mabel walked in silent anger past the beds of flowering gold ;  
Not a look she gave of greeting to that base, unworthy crew,  
Swirling round her train of satin o'er the soft grass bloomed with dew.

#### III.

Suddenly beside a fountain on her lovers Mabel turned,  
A maiden blush was on her cheek, her eyes with anger burned.  
"Villain suitors !" cried the lady, "eating up my poor estate ;  
I, Penelope unguarded, still for a deliverer wait.

"Is there no one really loves me? none to free me from these knaves?  
From their insolence release me—none to chase away these slaves?—  
Smell-feasts, who with churlish clamour, seek my poor defenceless hand,  
Only that they may the sooner gnaw into my gold and land !"

Silent stood that flock of suitors, not one sought to lead the rest ;  
But each one, sullen, flung his cloak athwart his craven breast.  
Then stepped the gentle student-boy before those recreant men,  
And drew his sword, and cried aloud, "Back each one to his den !"

Then every face grew black to hear that bitterness of speech,  
From every gilded sheath flashed out the angry sword of each :  
"Let's whip this bookworm, poor and hungry, to his scurvy garret lair,  
To read his Ovid's wanton songs, and pine and scribble there."

Then as a traveller would turn to brush the gnats away,  
The lover strode, his eyes flashed red, as royal stag at bay ;  
He would not use his sword for fear to fright the lady fair,  
But leapt and seized the foremost man, his strong hand in his hair.

He wrapped his cloak around his arm, he smote among their swords,  
Striking hard and sturdy buffets on the mouths of those proud lords ;  
Snapping blades and tearing mantles, like a lion at his meal,  
Laughing at the stab of dagger and the flashing of their steel.

GERMAN HUSSAR SONGS.

From one he tore his feathered hat, from one he rent his cloak,  
Though blood ran out and daubed his face, still fell his angry stroke.  
A wild bull goring could not drive with more inpetuous horn  
Than he, the stripling so despised, when he arose in scorn.

They fled, the cowards, every one,—with gems the walks were strown :  
Here lay a brooch of Indian pearl, and there an emerald stone ;  
They threw their swords away and fled, each pale as parted corse,  
They did not stay to rest or eat, but took at once to horse.

A moment pale and motionless the poet stood—nor spoke—  
Looked with fixed eyes as in a trance—neither the silence broke.  
He spurned the jewels with his foot, then knelt to kiss her hand—  
He the poor vagrant London poet, and she the lady of the land.

Humbly Mabel turned to thank him, with an almost tearful smile,  
Looking at his breast and forehead, lest some wound should bleed the while.  
Low he bowed, and was departing, picking up a broken sword,  
Fearing ambush from the vengeance of some bruised and beaten lord.

“Edward,” said she, soft and gently, as a whisper in a dream :  
Like a prophet’s revelation then upon him burst love’s beam.  
He turned, and kissed her lips and forehead, and one long wind-driven tress,  
Then whispered ; and a soft low murmur, scarcely syllabled, said “Yes.”

German Hussar Songs.

MINNY, reach me out your hand,  
’T is a true pledge, understand.  
Love is our eternal lot,  
Mind these words, “Forget-me-not.”  
Minny, I will think of you  
Till this sabre snaps in two.

Lizzy, when away from thee,  
I am steeped in misery,  
Without thee my life is lost  
All the Summer long in frost.  
Lizzy, I will dream of you  
Till this sabre snaps in two.

When to the parade I go,  
Fanny absent, all is woe,  
In my heart Love’s arrow burns  
Till the moment she returns.  
Though this sabre snaps in two,  
Fanny, I will think of you.

Last night I’d a dream of thee,  
Mary, if you’ll credit me,  
You had loved me dearest, best,  
Chosen me from all the rest.  
Mary, I will think of you  
Till this sabre snaps in two.

*GERMAN HUSSAR SONGS.*

Had I in this world the gold  
Of King Cræsus, ay, twice told,  
Would it be as dear to me,  
Sweetest, as the love of thee?  
Bessy, I will think of you  
Till this sabre snaps in two.

Kitty's little sugar mouth,  
Stops Love's very keenest drouth.  
Kitty (don't let people hear),  
You must be my wife, my dear.  
Kitty, I will think of you,  
Though this sabre snaps in two.



II.

With careless hearts and full of glee  
We charge upon the enemy ;  
But ere we mount, brave fame to seek,  
We kiss our darling's lip and cheek,  
And parting, parting, cry Hurrah !

Now, forward, men! There stands the  
foe!  
As fast as thunderbolts we go,

United by a holy band,  
For God and for the Fatherland,  
And all, and all with an Hurrah !

See how the foemen turn and fly  
When our red sabres meet their eye.  
No mere revenge has given us breath,  
Our cry is "Victory or Death !"  
And all, and all with an Hurrah !



*THE RETURN OF THE BEAR-HUNTERS.*

Then back so gaily we repair :  
Sunshine and Love fill all the air,  
And welcome is the cry we hear  
As home we reach, and far and near  
They shout and shout, as we, Hurrah !

**The Return of the Bear-Hunters.**

SHALL I tell you how we killed the bear,  
My boy Fritz with the golden hair?  
I stuck in my hat this sprig of fir—  
Your sister Clara, 't was picked by her.

The bullets I'd rammed down hard and fast,  
My horn athwart my breast I'd cast ;  
Yet I would not fire when from the bush  
The hind leaped gaily—hoosh, hoosh, hoosh !

Because 't was the bear that day we sought ;  
The bear that our bravest dogs had fought.  
On the mountain-side the echoes rang—  
I saw his grizzly snout—bing-bang !

Crack went the maple-twigg by his ear ;  
None of the others went half so near.  
Then he came at me ; the dogs like chaff  
He scattered ; again I went piff-paff !

This time he staggered, and rolled, and fell  
Very near twice as deep as hell.  
'T was love that helped me shoot so true ;  
Clara, 't was thinking, my own, of you !

I shouted to Rupert and Hans, " Holà !"  
Then sounded my horn, Trara, trara !  
I've promised Clara the thick brown skin  
To line her father's cloak within.

That's why I shot so well—kling-klang,  
Hoosh, hoosh, trara, Heisa, bing-bang !  
A magic bullet I'd cast that day :  
Zamiel, harm me not, I pray.

My boy Fritz, you're a hunter's son ;  
When you are fit to handle a gun,  
You too shall make the old cliffs laugh  
With the snap, crack, whistle, bing-bang, piff-  
paff !



## The Death of th' Owd Squire.

'T WAS a wild, mad kind of night, as black as the bottomless pit,  
The wind was howling away, like a Bedlamite in a fit,  
Tearing the ash-boughs off, and mowing the poplars down,  
In the meadows beyond the old flour-mill, where you turn oft to the town.

And the rain (well, it *did* rain) dashing the window glass,  
And deluging on the roof, as the Devil were come to pass ;  
The gutters were running in floods outside the stable door,  
And the spouts splashed from the tiles, as if they would never give o'er.

Lor' how the winders rattled ! you'd almost ha' thought that thieves  
Were wrenching at the shutters, while a ceaseless pelt of leaves  
Flew at the door in gusts ; and I could hear the beck  
Calling so loud, I knew at once it was up to a tall man's neck.

We was huddling in the harness-room, by a little scrap of fire,  
And Tom, the coachman, he was there, a-practising for the choir ;  
But it sounded desmal, anthem did, for Squire was dying fast,  
And the doctor'd said, do what he would, "Squire's breaking up at last."

The Death-watch, sure enough, ticked loud just over th' owd mare's head,  
Though he had never once been heard up there since master's boy lay dead ;  
And the only sound, besides Tom's toon, was the stirring in the stalls,  
And the gnawing and the scratching of the rats in the owd walls.

We couldn't hear Death's foot pass by, but we knew that he was near ;  
And the chill rain, and the wind and cold, made us all shake with fear ;  
We listened to the clock upstairs,—'t was breathing soft and low,  
For the nurse said at the turn of night the old Squire's soul would go.

Master had been a wildish man, and led a roughish life ;  
Didn't he shoot the Bowton Squire, who dared write to his wife ?  
He beat the Rads at Hindon town, I heard, in 'Twenty-nine,  
When every pail in market-place was brimmed with red port wine.

And as for hunting, bless your soul ! why, for forty year or more  
He'd kept the Marley hounds, man, as his fayther did afore ;  
And now to die, and in his bed—the season just begun—  
It made him fret, the doctor said, as 't might do any one.

*THE DEATH OF TIP OWD SQUIRE.*

---

And when the young sharp lawyer came to see him sign his will,  
Squire made me blow my horn outside as we was going to kill;  
And we turned the hounds out in the court—that seemed to do him good;  
For he swore, and sent us off to seek a fox in Thornhill Wood.

But then the fever it rose high, and he would go see the room  
Where missus died ten years ago when Lammastide shall come:  
I mind the year, because our mare at Salisbury broke down;  
Moreover the town hall was burnt at Steeple Dinton town.

It might be two, or half-past two, the wind seemed quite asleep;  
Tom, he was off, but I awake sat, watch and ward to keep;  
The moon was up, quite glorious like, the rain no longer fell,  
When all at once out clashed and clanged the rusty turret bell,

That hadn't been heard for twenty year, not since the Luddite days;  
Tom he leapt up, and I leapt up, for all the house ablaze  
Had sure not scared us half as much; and out we ran like mad—  
I, Tom, and Joe, the whipper-in, and t' little stable lad.

“He's killed hisself,” that's the idea that came into my head;  
I felt as sure as though I saw Squire Barrowby was dead;  
When all at once a door flew back, and he met us face to face;  
His scarlet coat was on his back, and he looked like the old race.

The nurse was clinging to his knees, and crying like a child;  
The maids were sobbing on the stairs, for he looked fierce and wild:  
“Saddle me Lightning Bess, my man,” that's what he said to me;  
“The moon is up, we're sure to find at Stop or Etterby.

“Get out the hounds; I'm well to-night, and young again and sound;  
I'll have a run once more before they put me underground:  
They brought my father home feet first, and it never shall be said  
That his son Joe, who rode so straight, died quietly in his bed.

“Brandy!” he cried; “a tumbler-full, you women howling there!”  
Then clapped the old black velvet cap upon his long grey hair,  
Thrust on his boots, snatched down his whip; though he was old and weak,  
There was a devil in his eye, that would not let me speak.

We loosed the hounds to humour him, and sounded on the horn;  
The moon was up above the woods, just east of Haggard Bourne;  
I buckled Lightning's throat-lash fast; the Squire was watching me;  
He let the stirrups down himself, so quick, yet carefully.

*THE THREE STATUES OF ÆGINA.*

---

Then up he got and spurred the mare, and, ere I well could mount,  
He drove the yard gate open, man, and called to old Dick Blount,  
Our huntsman, dead five years ago—for the fever rose again,  
And was spreading, like a flood of flame, fast up into his brain.

Then off he flew before the hounds, yelling to call us on,  
While we stood there, all pale and dumb, scarce knowing he was gone;  
We mounted, and below the hill we saw the fox break out,  
And down the covert ride we heard the old Squire's parting shout.

And in the moonlit meadow mist we saw him fly the rail  
Beyond the hurdles by the beck, just half-way down the vale;  
I saw him breast fence after fence—nothing could turn him back;  
And in the moonlight after him streamed out the brave old pack.

'Twas like a dream, Tom cried to me, as we rode free and fast;  
Hoping to turn him at the brook, that could not well be past,  
For it was swollen with the rain; but, LORD! 'twas not to be;  
Nothing could stop old Lightning Bess but the broad breast of the sea.

The hounds swept on, and well in front the mare had got her stride;  
She broke across the fallow land that runs by the down side;  
We pulled up on Chalk Linton Hill, and as we stood us there,  
Two fields beyond we saw the Squire fall stone dead from the mare.

Then she swept on, and, in full cry, the hounds went out of sight;  
A cloud came over the broad moon, and something dimmed our sight,  
As Tom and I bore master home, both speaking under breath;  
And that's the way I saw th' owd Squire ride boldly to his death.

---

*The Three Statues of Ægina.*

CHIRON, the sculptor, night and day,  
Toils o'er his heaps of Samian clay.  
The years of anxious care are past—  
A masterpiece is wrought at last.  
He breaks the mould, and, lo! appears  
A rustic God, with wild goat's ears.

The judge condemns—and Chiron yet  
Over the clay must sigh and sweat.  
"Not strength alone, but beauty, gives  
The prize for which the sculptor lives."  
A second trial—VENUS he  
Has shown us rising from the sea.

THE THREE STATUES OF ÆGINA.

Again he fails—for sages say,  
“In art that wisdom must have sway ;  
That beauty, true, is flower and root,

Wisdom alone the ripened fruit.”  
Again his lamp burns, day and night,  
And, lo ! MINERVA, mailed in light.



The judges meet—the Archon stands,  
The oak-crown in his wrinkled hands.  
“All hail to Chiron !” is the cry  
That scares the white doves in the sky.  
“Why sits he, then, with upturned face,  
Nor moveth from his resting-place ?”

*Pluto has called him.* He is gone.  
A shade that victor crown has on.  
They bear pale Chiron to the pile,  
Where the blue waves unceasing smile ;  
And there, in sunshine and in gloom,  
Those triple statues guard his tomb.

## Warlock Woods.

THE oaks are doomed in pleasant Warlock Woods;  
Soon they'll come crashing through the hazel copse;  
Already rocking like poor wind-tossed ships,  
I see their reeling spars and waving tops.

Shipwrecked indeed: the old estate is gone;  
The knights have yielded to King Mammon's lords;  
Rent is the good escutcheon—sable, gules;  
Shivered at last the brave Crusaders' swords.

Soon barked and bare, the oak-trees' giant limbs  
Will strew the covert, all o'ergrown with fern:  
I hear the jarring axe that cleaves and splits;  
I see the woodman's fires that crackling burn.

'T would be a dismal sight in Winter-time,  
When boughs are snapped, and branches tempest-cleft,  
When dead leaves drift across the rainy skies,  
And not a wayside flower of hope is left.

How much more mournful now in sunny air,  
When hyacinths in shade grow blue and rank,  
When echoing cuckoos greet the Spring again,  
And violets purple every primrose bank.

Here has the flying rebel cowering hid,  
Waiting the footfall and the pitying eyes;  
And here, with sullen psalms and gloomy prayers,  
The Ironsides have doled their prophecies.

And here the outlaws, in the Norman time,  
Strung their big bows, and filed their arrow-heads,  
While the wine-jug went round so fierce and fast,  
When near them lay the fallow-deer just dead.

These trees have heard full many a parting kiss,  
The suicide's last prayer, the lover's sigh,  
The murdered one's wild scream: it is for this  
I hold them bound to man in sympathy.

## DUTCH PICTURES.

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The oak woods pay for many a spendthrift's fault ;  
Old giants, centuries long without a fear,  
Fall prostrate at one scornful tap from thee,  
Frail ivory hammer of the auctioneer.

"Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang,"  
No more to be the homes of hawk or owl ;  
No more on stormy nights the banshee wind  
Shall through thy riven branches gasp and howl.

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## Dutch Pictures.

NEVER thoughtful, wise, or sainted—  
This is how the Dutchman painted—  
Glossy satin, all a-shine :  
Amber rich, as bright as wine.

Red-nosed rascal, cap awry,  
Holding flagon to his eye,  
Every word a curse or lie.

Utrecht feasts and Zealand dances,  
Drunken skips, and reeling prances,  
Troopers with red drums and lances.

Gallants robed in purple cloak,  
Orange scarfed, who drink and smoke,  
Careless what boor's head is broke.

Ladies trim in scarlet boddice,  
Swansdown edged, each one a goddess ;  
But laughing at an ape—which odd is.

Knaves in steeple hats, who lean  
Over door-hatch—vine-leaves green—  
Gadding round the window screen.

Brutal boors, who strum a lute—  
Screw their faces to a flute—  
Grey and scarlet each man's suit.

Pipers maddening a fair ;  
Moulted banks who make fools stare ;  
Drunken fights, with lugging hair.

Cavaliers in silver grey,  
Looking, in a mocking way,  
At the skittle-players' fray.

Tranquil groups of dappled kine ;  
Yellow-red, or dark as wine.  
Willows standing in a line ;

Long canals 'mid sunny grass,  
Where the barges drag and pass,  
Stared at by the milking lass.

Cuyp's rich mellow gold I see ;  
Teniers' silver purity ;  
Potter's broad serenity—

Jewel colour, clear of dye ;  
Crystal tender to the eye ;  
Subtle in each harmony.

Glossy satin's rolling shine—  
Yellow silk, as bright as wine—  
Never thoughtful, wise, or sainted—  
This is how the Dutchman painted.

### **A Lie.**

A THISTLE grew in a sluggard's croft,  
Rough, and rank with a thorny growth,  
With its spotted leaves, and its purple flowers  
(Blossoms of Sin, and bloom of Sloth);  
Slowly it ripened its baneful seeds,  
And away they scattered in swift grey showers.

But every seed was cobweb winged,  
And they spread o'er a hundred miles of land.  
'Tis centuries now since they first took flight,  
In that careless, gay, and mischievous band,  
Yet still they are blooming and ripening fast,  
And spreading their evil by day and night.

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### **A Rifle Duel in Arkansas.**

HE'D slandered my mother, who was born free,  
So I swore I would drop him or he drop me :  
We met with rifles near Cedar Creek  
'Bout sundown, yesterday was a week.

The buzzards sat on a sassasfras-tree,  
Croaking and gloating and waiting for me ;  
The rattlesnakes moved in the cotton-wood copse,  
The night wind sighed in the cane-brake tops.

He patted his rifle, barrel and breech,  
He clicked the trigger : no waste of speech.  
He pulled out slowly his powder-horn,  
Then greased a bullet, and whistled in scorn.

He loaded slow, but he fired right smart,  
With much goodwill, yet not much art :  
The bullet it splintered and chipped the tree,  
A coppery cedar, close to me.



*A RIFLE DUEL IN ARKANSAS.*

I fired, and the well-greased ball went true,  
Cutting the skunk's old felt hat through,—  
An inch too high, but it raised his hair,  
And made the buzzards flap in the air.



He bit his lip till the blood sprang out,  
Then leaped up twice with a yell and a shout ;  
“Old coon,” he cried, “when I fire again,  
I’ll drill a hole in your Yankee brain.”

He rammed down the lead with an acid grin,  
And his black smeared hand moved over his chin ;

## THE YEAR'S TWELVE CHILDREN.

Then fired, and hit me close by the knee.  
"Hallo!" he shouted, "that's one to me."

But I poured in the powder, coarse and large,  
Jammed down the cone of smooth-greased lead  
(I'd measured him out my largest charge),  
Then fired, and shot him clean through the head.

## The Year's Twelve Children.

**JANUARY**, worn and grey,  
Like an old pilgrim by the way,  
Watches the snow, and shivering sighs,  
As the wild curlew round him flies;  
Or huddled underneath a thorn,  
Sits praying for the lingering morn.  
**FEBRUARY**, bluff and bold,  
O'er furrows striding, scorns the cold;  
And with his horses two abreast,  
Makes the keen plough do his behest.  
Rough **MARCH** comes blustering down the  
road,  
In his wroth hand the oxen's goad;  
Or, with a rough and angry haste,  
Scatters the seed o'er the dark waste.  
**APRIL**, a child, half tears, half smiles,  
Trips full of little playful wiles;  
And laughing 'neath her rainbow hood,  
Seeks the wild violets in the wood.  
**MAY**, the bright maiden, singing goes  
To where the snowy hawthorn blows,  
Watching the lambs leap in the dells,  
Hearing the simple village bells.  
**JUNE**, with the mower's scarlet face,  
Moves o'er the clover-field apace,

And fast his crescent scythe sweeps on  
O'er spots from whence the lark has flown.  
**JULY**—the farmer, happy fellow,  
Laughs to see the corn grow yellow;  
The heavy grain he tosses up  
From his right hand as from a cup.  
**AUGUST**—the reaper cleaves his way  
Through golden waves at break of day;  
Or on his waggon, piled with corn,  
At sunset, home is proudly borne.  
**SEPTEMBER**, with his braying hound,  
Leaps fence and pale at every bound;  
And casts unto the wind in scorn  
All cares and dangers from his horn.  
**OCTOBER** comes, a woodman old,  
Fenced with tough leather from the cold;  
Round swings his sturdy axe, and lo!  
A fir-branch falls at every blow.  
**NOVEMBER** cowers before the flame,  
Bleared crone, forgetting her own name!  
Watches the blue smoke curling rise,  
And broods upon old memories.  
**DECEMBER** fat and rosy strides,  
His old heart warm, well clothed his sides,  
With kindly word for young and old,

*THE YEAR'S TWELVE CHILDREN.*



The cheerier for the bracing cold ;  
Laughing a welcome, open flings  
His doors, and as he does it, sings.

## The Wreck off Calais.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1866.

THE waves broke over the harbour light,  
The women ran, screaming, along the pier,  
The wind like a wild beast howled; the night  
Grew darker as, with a shudder of fear,  
We saw just then, by the flash and flare  
A hissing rocket a moment cast,  
A tossing wreck swept almost bare,  
Ay! the cruel end it was coming fast!

A few more blows from the breaking sea,  
A few more surges of angry wave,  
And a floating spar and a plank would be  
All that was left. Was there none to save?  
None to struggle with surf and tide,  
And the foaming hell of the angry flood,  
That raved and raged with a devilish pride,  
Howling, as 't were, for human blood?

'T was a little brig of St. Nazaire  
That wrestled with Satan at sea that night;  
And the steady lighthouse flame fell there  
On the women's faces, wan and white;  
The children sobbed, and the mothers wept,  
Hearing the sailors' screaming cries,  
As the torchlight fell on the waves that leapt,  
And gleamed on the staring and sorrowing eyes.

And now we could see the savage rush  
Of the wolfish waves as they bore along,  
And swept o'er the wreck with a ravening crush.  
Then the moon shone out from the gloom bygone,  
And up in the rigging dark it showed,  
Bound to the ropes, five half-drowned men.  
And one poor boy, who a spar bestrode  
Till a breaker bore him into its den.

No brave man's heart could bear that cry,  
As below, on the moonlit level sands,  
The women knelt in their agony,  
And wrung their tight-clasped pallid hands.

*THE WRECK OFF CALAIS.*

The moon was full, but its tranquil light  
Lent only a terror to the snow,  
And a horror and fear to the rolling surge,  
And the restless mighty seethe and flow.

Then we English fellows, with cheer and shout,  
Ran eagerly down to the farther sand,  
And dragged the life-boat quickly out,—  
Not one of us lads but bore a hand.



'Twas bedded deep in the silt and snow,  
And the drift was round it high and fast ;  
But we dragged it steadily, though slow,  
Till the deeper water was reached at last.

But just as we launched, a sour-faced man  
Came tow'rds us, biting his lips, and bade  
The noisy Frenchmen, who after him ran,  
"Pull out at once." Well, they were afraid ;

*THE WRECK OFF CALAIS.*

---

Still they tumbled in in their bragging way,  
Shouting their gibberish loud enough ;  
But half-way came a wave at play,  
And the lubbers were not of a right good stuff.

So they turned, and left the men to drown ;  
Then we went mad at that, and raced  
For the boat at the other end of the town ;  
And we ferried across ; but the fools, disgraced,  
Would not bring the key, and were sullen and glum.  
So we tore down the rails, which did quite as well,  
And launched the boat, and were cool and dumb,  
Till we pulled away for that foaming hell.

How loud they cheered from the pier and sands  
As we shot like a sea-bird to the wreck ;  
Our hearts were good, but how weak our hands !  
Waves do not yield to a coxswain's beck.  
A cruel sea struck our staggering boat,  
A moment, and half of us had gone ;  
And I and some others, on oars afloat,  
Saw the careless wave roll roaring on.

But English are English, come what may ;  
And life to them is a paltry thing  
Compared with duty ; so quickly they  
Pushed off while we were still struggling ;  
And rescuing all that were left, again  
We pulled through the racing rolling tide,  
And saved the last Frenchman, whose worn weak brain  
Had turned when his friends had slowly died.

And the Sunday morning, when all was calm,  
Our steamboat left with the five dead men,  
And half-way across we sang a psalm  
Beside the row of coffins, and then  
The captain read us a chapter or two,  
Till presently up the white cliffs came ;  
But not for them, the brave and true,  
Who put the Calais men to shame.





### Basking.

I 'VE made myself a nest  
Where the grass is all in flower,  
Where the wild rose sheds its leaves,  
Where the great ox-daisies tower.  
I watch the butterfly  
Roam all the wide field over,  
As lazily I lie  
For once at least in clover.

The swallows skim and dip  
Around me and above me ;  
The wild doves in the copse  
Murmur as if they love me.  
I hear a voice once dear  
In every blackbird's whistle,  
And even in the chirp  
Of the goldfinch on the thistle.

THE BLACKBIRD'S SONG.

---

I am lord of these domains  
For a Summer hour at least,  
And I bid the fairies come  
To the revel and the feast,  
From the honeysuckle's bloom,  
From the bell of the foxglove swaying,  
From the cup of every flower  
Where the little rogues are playing.

My pipe by my lazy hand  
Burns like a gunner's fuse,  
When the dead men trampled lie ;  
And see, fast over my shoes  
The ants, an eager host,  
Are bent upon invading,  
Fierce, ruthless, hot, and keen,  
For conquest and crusading.

Between the wiry stalks  
Of grasses gaily dancing  
I see shy creatures peep,  
And fairies' quick eyes glancing ;  
Small monsters climb and pry  
Upon the cowslip blossom,  
Clinging like sailor boys  
When the sou'-westers toss 'em.

The dragon-fly with wings  
Of silver gauze is darting ;  
The midges circling waltz,  
Now meeting, and now parting.

In the brook that near me flows  
The yellow lily's swimming,  
Where just beyond the mill  
The fuller stream is brimming.

Close by me in the field  
The dappled cows are browsing,  
And there on the kingcup's gold  
The sleeping bee is drowsing.  
As the fairies will not come,  
At least in any number,  
I'll steal just half an hour  
For a little dreamy slumber.

I feel like a man enchanted  
By these Summer sounds and sights ;  
Titania, come in splendour,  
Crowned with thy glowworm lights.  
Come in the sunlight dim,  
And kiss me as I'm sleeping ;  
Already thy fairy guards  
Their secret watch are keeping.

I fall from cloud to cloud,  
Down a precipice of dreams,  
Deeper than ever Vulcan fell—  
I see strange lands and streams ;  
When all at once soft lips touch mine  
(It's a fact that I am stating),  
And the sweetest voice you ever heard  
Says, "Darling, tea is waiting."

---

The Blackbird's Song.

THE bee is asleep in the heart of the rose,  
The lark's nestled soft in the cloud,  
The swallow lies snug close under the eaves—  
But the blackbird's fluting it loud ;  
He pipes as no hermit would nor should,  
Half a mile deep in the heart of the wood,  
In the green dark heart of the wood.



### THE PRIVATE BURYING-PLACE.

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The raven's asleep in the thick of the oak,  
His head close under his wing ;  
The lark's come down to his home on the earth—  
But the blackbird still will sing,  
Making the heart of the dark wood thrill  
With the notes that come from his golden bill,  
That flow from his golden bill.

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### The Private Burying-Place.

THE chestnut opens out its fans ;  
The beech unfolds its pleated leaves ;  
The goldfinch in the hawthorn-bush  
Its nest with soft moss weaves ;  
Hard by, the brook (where cresses throng)  
Runs, babbling merrily, along.

This is the spot I've singled out  
For my last long tranquil sleep.  
I'll lie with folded hands in trance,  
Through which low murmuring tones will  
Dim memories of yesterday, [creep,  
And voices sweet, but far away.

The wind is surging in the firs  
(Those red-barked giants of the wood) ;  
The rooks are wheeling round the elms,  
That now the widening blossoms hood ;  
No other sound, but where the brook  
Gurgles around some stony nook.

Here, when my long day's work is done,  
I shall lie underneath the grass,  
And still, like one in a half-trance,  
Shall yet distinguish men that pass ;  
For sorrows, even such as mine,  
Death brings a certain anodyne.

The little airy globes of down  
Shall poise above me ; and the bees  
Drag at the purple clover flowers ;  
And all day long, high in the trees,  
The blackbird, with his golden pipe,  
Shall sing of Summer ere 't is ripe.

After a toilsome sordid life,  
What majesty there is in Death !  
What riches that no king can touch !  
What mystery in the ceasing breath !  
Sorrows that time hath brought to me,  
Share not my immortality.

The trefoil shall grow thick and soft,  
And daisies star my emerald pall ;  
And soft shall fall the Summer dew,  
And soft the Summer showers shall fall ;  
The sunbeams shall point to my grave,  
And the plumed grasses o'er me wave.

When I lie deep down in the hold  
Of this great planet-ship of ours,  
And it shall roll and circle on  
Through its predestined days and hours,  
Come storm or tempest, I shall rest  
Warm in my little sheltered nest.

*TÆDIUM VITÆ.—CASTLE CLARE.*

---

Sprinkle upon me drifting rain,  
Or swathes of cold effacing snow,  
Or let the sunshine burn and parch,  
I shall be still and calm below ;  
I shall fear neither rain nor sun,  
When I and Mother-earth are one.

The generations pass away  
Like the winged thistle-seed ; why then  
Fear Death more than the clover does ?  
We cannot change the doom of men.  
So welcome Death : these woes of mine,  
They need thy certain anodyne.

---

*Tædium Vitæ.*

“CREATION ’s over—man, you know,  
Was God’s last work—each wind that  
blows  
Howls the old tunes.—Ah ! see, I pluck  
The million millionth rose.”

Bah ! you but skim the sea of truth—  
Nothing is old to the fresh brain.  
In every blushing dawn I see  
Creation’s morning o’er again.

Hope blooms anew in every leaf  
That ruffles out upon yon beech ;  
The birds sing of Eternal Love,  
And struggle for the gift of speech.

See this broad sycamore : each leaf  
Framed on the pattern of last Spring,  
The old jags cut in the same way  
As when Ahab was King.

And mark these white stars in the grass,  
Rose-tipped as in the Tartar fields,  
The day that, crowning Tamerlane,  
His horsemen clashed their shields.

Our Arts may change—but Nature works  
On old and very settled rules,  
And needs no Fashion’s pattern-book,  
No second course of model schools.

---

*Castle Clare.*

FROM holly-bush and leafless larch,  
From beech-tree rusty-red,  
Now music comes to wake the flowers  
That sleep on mossy bed.  
For blackbirds pipe upon the elms  
To the echoes hiding there ;  
And merry and strong the thrushes flute  
All round brave Castle Clare.

The deer feed in the sloping dell,  
The swans are on the wave,  
The trout leap up for very joy  
In silver armour brave ;  
The lark above the fallow sings,  
Poised in the calm blue air,  
Rejoicing every breeze that blows  
Sweetly o’er Castle Clare.



Its towers stand grandly in the sun  
That gilds their circling vanes ;

### *SHELLS.*

---

Soft clouds of billowing white roll by  
Laden with gentle rains.  
The birds upon a thousand trees,  
Like children free from care,  
Carol in the green spreading parks  
Of leaf-clad Castle Clare.

Now foals in grassy paddocks pent  
Leap, welcoming the Spring ;  
I am the happiest creature born,  
For Love has crowned me king.  
Nelly, to-day, with arm in mine,  
Said "Yes" to my fond prayer ;  
And now the meadows seem all flowers  
Around dear Castle Clare.

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### *Shells.*

FROM soundings twenty fathoms down,  
Deep, deep below the mountain wave ;  
From that unutterable calm  
Where the worn seaman finds a grave ;

Where storms nor sunshine ever reach—  
Death's frontier—where the tempests cease ;  
Where never sound of sorrow comes,  
And all is silence, all is peace ;

I dredged a handful of sea-shells—  
Small beaded dust. But, who would stay  
To scrutinize mere lees and drift,  
Thrown by at the creation day ?

"Nature has idled here," I said,  
"Folded her arms while worlds were spinning,  
Accomplished nothing of her plans,  
But lingered in the mere beginning."

*THE BIRTH OF SONG.*

---

Fool that I was! a closer gaze  
Taught me that Nature never sleeps;  
And that the sea's her treasure-house,  
Where she her choicest jewels keeps.

What rosy pearls, bright zoned or striped!  
What freckled surface, iris-dyed!  
Fluted and grooved, with iv'ry lips,  
Spotted like panthers, peacock-eyed!

Look closer, as the angels can,  
And you will see the fairy work—  
The ruby specks, the azure veins,  
That in the tiniest hollow, lurk.

Was it for us that Nature decked  
These smallest of created things,  
Then hid them in the boundless deep?  
Say, why do Autumns follow Springs?

Mark an Artificer Divine  
In these, in all, thou sneering one!  
Deride the GOD who made the fly,  
You scorn the GOD who made the sun!

---

**The Birth of Song.**

SONG rises in the poet's heart  
As the bubbles do in wine;  
Born of the sweetness and the strength  
That prove the draught divine.

As sudden as the meadow-flowers  
Leap forth in early May;  
As swift as lark in morn of June  
Springs up to greet the day;—

As sudden as 'mid Summer shower  
The rainbow has its birth;  
As rapid as the crystal fount  
Upstarteth from the earth;—

The flower may die, the rainbow fade,  
The echo pass away,  
But still a thought of beauty past  
Within some mind will stay.

### Sitting in the Sun.

WHEN Hope deceives, and friends betray,  
And kinsmen shun me with a flout ;  
When hair grows white, and eyes grow dim,  
And life's slow sand is nigh run out,  
I'll ask no boon of any one,  
But sing old songs, and sit i' the sun.

When memory is my only joy,  
And all my thoughts shall backward turn ;  
When eyes shall cease to glow with love,  
And heart with generous fire to burn,  
I'll ask no boon of any one,  
But sing old songs, and sit i' the sun.

When sounds grow low to deafening ears,  
And suns shine not as once they did ;  
When parting is no more a grief,  
And I do whatsoe'er they bid,  
I'll ask no boon of any one,  
But sing old songs, and sit i' the sun.

Then underneath a spreading elm,  
That guards some little cottage door,  
I'll dance a grandchild on my knee,  
And count my past days o'er and o'er,  
Asking no boon of any one,  
But to sing old songs, and sit i' the sun.

### An Autumn Evening.

IN scattered plumes the floating clouds  
Went drifting down the west,  
Like barks that in their haven soon  
Would moor and be at rest.  
The Day sank down, a monarch tired,  
Upon Night's sable breast.

The wind was all but hushed asleep,  
Yet now and then it stirred  
A great tree's top, and whispering,  
Awoke a slumbering bird,  
Who half aroused, but only chirped  
A song of just a word.



*EASTER SUNDAY IN THE COUNTRY.*

And in the west the rosy light  
Spread out a thousand arms,  
Each with a torch, whose crimson flame  
Stretched o'er the peaceful farms,  
And o'er the yellow corn, that lay  
Unconscious of all harms.

Then changed into a waste of blue  
A desert tract of air,  
Where no rich clouds, like Indian flowers  
Bore blossoms bright and fair ;  
And over all, a sense of want  
And something lost was there.

**Easter Sunday in the Country.**

A SABBATH calm is on the fields,  
No ploughman drives his team abreast ;  
And in the pure blue silent air  
There reigns a sanctity of rest.  
Type of CHRIST breaking from His tomb,  
The lark is rising through the gloom.

O'er corn and fallow, lawn and slope,  
I hear the blessed Sabbath bell,  
And, standing on the down, I mark  
The wandering music loud and swell.  
Thro' yellow clouds the lark has risen,  
Like one new broken from Death's prison.

The birds are springing from the corn  
To hail the happy Easter-time ;  
From Winter's tomb breaks forth the Spring,  
The year will soon be in its prime ;  
The lark in sunlight glorified,  
At death and sorrow doth deride.

Night's shadows still are on the watch,  
Like soldiers guarding round a grave ;  
The lark it soars exulting up,  
Like Him who came to bless and save,  
And rises on this morn of May  
Type of the Resurrection-day.

Just where the grey clouds melt to rose,  
Between earth and yon burning red,  
The blessed bird goes soaring on,  
Singing to us so cold and dead.  
Soaring where red cloud joins the blue,  
Piercing resistless through and through.

I see the faces ruddy brown,  
The maidens with their hair so sheen,  
With kindly welcome and with smile,  
They cluster on the village green.  
Hark ! in the air the angels sing  
In chorus, glorifying Spring.

Now far away the old, old bells  
Call to us o'er the russet leas ;  
O'er squared-out fields, and fallows dark,  
Long winding lanes, and marshalled trees,  
From the grey spire that from the graves  
Points to the GOD who hears and saves.







**D**ewfall.

DEWFALL—and I sat and read  
A letter wet with tears *she* shed :  
First grief like a blight-wind blows,  
Blistering life's Summer rose.

GUN-FIRE—and I tried to weep  
O'er a face that seemed to sleep—  
Far away from home and those  
Who saw our love grow like a rose.

THE GREAT ENCHANTER.—AN OLD BALLAD RE-WRITTEN.

SUN-DOWN—and a grey-haired man  
Pores o'er life's torn chart and plan  
Traces lines almost erased,  
Traces letters half defaced :  
By his side a faded rose,  
Yellow, withered,—“one of those.”

The Great Enchanter.

Sleep makes us all Pashas.—*Bedouin Proverb.*

SLEEP is the poor man's warmest cloak ;  
His treasurer to dispense  
His lavish alms, and turn to gold  
His scanty pence.

He heals the sick man in a dream,  
And sets the fettered free ;  
He calls the beggar from his den  
To golden luxury.

He crowns the hounded exile-king ;  
Reverses Fate's decrees ;  
And bids the briefless Pleader rise  
Judge of the Common Pleas.

Sleep joins the parted lovers' hands ;  
Wreathes the starved poet's brow ;

And calls the hero still unknown  
From lonely village plough.

Sleep holds the resurrection keys,  
And from his shadowy plain,  
Down Memory's long and cloudy vaults,  
The dead glide back again.

Sleep comes, like death, alike to all—  
Divine equality !  
Blesses the monarch in his state,  
The slave upon the sea.

Sleep brings our childhood back again—  
The only Golden Age ;  
Sleep ! O thou blessed alchemist,  
Thou holy Archimage !

An old Ballad Re-written.

ANNAN WATER.

“ANNAN water's roaring deep,  
But my love Annie's wondrous bonny ;  
I'm loth that she should wet her feet,  
For, oh ! I love her best of ony.

“Go, saddle me the bonny black,  
Go, saddle quick, and make him ready ;  
For I will down the Gatehope Slack,  
And see my winsome little lady.

*AN OLD BALLAD RE-WRITTEN.*

“And saddle me the bonny grey,  
I'll lead her till the black is weary ;  
And fill me up a cup of wine.  
For, eh ! the storm is loud and dreary.

“I vowed to dance with her to-night,  
I swore it on the lips of Annie ;  
I swore it with her hand in mine,  
And not by one oath, but by many.



“Though Annan water ran with gold,  
And I could scoop it out at leisure,  
I'd give it all to have to-night  
Two honey kisses from my treasure.”

He's leaped upon his bonny black,  
From either spur the blood was flying ;

But ere he won the Gatehope Slack,  
The horse was not an hour from dying.

And louder grew the angry Clyde,  
From bank to brae the waters pouring ;  
They hungered for a drowning man ;  
'Twas for more food that they were roaring.

*ALL ALONE :*

He's leaped upon the bonnie grey,  
He rode as straight and fair as any ;  
And he would neither halt nor stay,  
For he was seeking bonnie Annie.

He's ridden fast o'er field and fell,  
Through moss and moor, and pool and  
mire ;  
His spurs with red were dripping fast,  
And from the steel hoofs flashed the fire.

"Now, bonny grey, now play your part,  
If ye're the steed to win my deary,  
On corn and hay ye'll live for aye,  
And never spur shall make you weary."

The grey she was of right good blood,  
But when she reached the nearest ford,  
She couldn't have gone a furlong more  
Though you had smote her with a sword.

"Oh, boatman, boatman, bring your boat !  
I'll give you, man, good golden money  
To put me o'er the darkening stream,  
For I must cross to see my honey.

"I swore an oath to her last night,  
And not one oath alone, but many,  
That though it rained a stream of fire,  
I'd cross and see my winsome Annie."

The sides are steep, the flood is deep,  
From brae to bank the falls are pouring :  
The bonnie grey mare sweats for fear,  
To hear the Water Kelpy roaring.

He's thrown away his velvet coat,  
His silver buckle, hat and feather,  
He's burst the waistcoat from his breast,  
He's thrown away his broad belt leather.

He's ta'en the ford, now help him, LORD !  
I wot he swam both strong and steady ;  
But the tide was broad, his strength it failed,  
—He never saw his bonny lady.

"Oh, woe betide the willow wand,  
And woe betide the brittle briar !  
They broke when grasped by my love's  
hand,  
When his strong limbs began to tire."

"Now woe betide ye, Annan stream !  
This night ye are a mournful river ;  
Over thy floods I'll build a brig,  
That ye no more true love may sever."

*All Alone !*

WHEN the swallows flee away,  
And the thrush has ceased its lay,  
Then the robin, all alone,  
Perches on the mossy stone,  
All alone !

Mourning for the Summer flown,  
All alone !  
For the joys all gone away,  
Like the leaves and their array,  
Like the flowers the last year sown,  
Passed away !

*ALL ALONE!*

When the berries ripen red,  
And the last leaf's fallen—dead;  
Then the robin, all alone,  
Sits upon the churchyard stone,  
All alone!



Mourning for the swallows flown,  
All alone!  
Where Death reigns as on a throne,  
Stone at foot, and stone at head—  
Things that Death can call his own—  
Cold the lassie's bridal-bed,  
Cold the pillow at her head;  
All alone!

## The Grub Street Poet's Vision.

BARDS of ancient time were blessed with visions :  
Did not Dante see again his Beatrice  
On the broad golden steps of heaven at sunset,  
Calm in serenity of changeless peace ?

Grub Street now, alas ! has lost such seers,  
Bailliff harpies vex its garret-dwellers ;  
No more nectar from bright Hebe's beaker  
Fills up the hogsheads in the poet's cellars.

And yet, kind angels, how I flaunt my falsehood !  
Lo, there descends a gracious vision. See !  
Where the huge bow of the proud crescent Quadrant,  
Bends with such power and stately majesty.

Yes ! look in yonder gravely rolling chariot :  
In Roman triumph to a poet's seeming  
There sits a very queen—but, nay, a Goddess,—  
The Venus of my long, long years of dreaming.

How like the face of her from whom I parted  
In anger thirty weary years ago !  
Ah ! she regards me not : yet, would she know me,  
Poor, old, and worn with life's rough ebb and flow ?

Unchanged her face, ye Gods of old Olympus !  
The brow of Dian, bright, serenely chaste,  
The neck of Hebe, eyes of Ariadne,  
The zone of Venus girding round that waist.

And what a form ! Oh, never Grecian sculptor  
Shaped out a Nereïd from the marble stone  
Half so divinely fair. And in a moment  
Dead love returns and claims his fallen throne.

From a high mountain you have seen a sunset  
Show for a moment through the parting gloom,  
So came that vision, and so swift its passage,  
Then deeper, darker spreads the boding gloom.

*IN CLOVER.*

So fades the rainbow and so fall the roses :  
Life's joys are only shown us and withdrawn ;  
Once more the weary tramp, the lonely vigil,  
The drudging labour till the grey of dawn.

*In Clover.*

*JUNE.*



**T**HERE is clover, Honey-sweet,  
Thick and tangled at our feet ;  
Crimson-spotted lies the field,  
Blood-blotted like a warrior's shield.  
Where the poppies, full of scorn,  
Proudly wave above the corn.  
*There is music at our feet,  
In the clover, honey-sweet.*

You may track the winds that blow  
Through the corn-fields as they go ;  
From the wheat, as from a sea,  
Springs the lark, in ecstasy.  
Now the bloom is on the blade,  
In the sun and in the shade.  
*There is music at our feet,  
In the clover, honey-sweet.*

## My own Miniature.

AND was I ever such an elf,  
Regardless of ambition, pelf,  
Much more the meaner sins,  
And all the diplomatic wiles  
That earn in life's poor game those smiles  
The best finesser wins?

And was I ever pink and white,  
Like daisy opening to the light  
In budding April-time?  
I, whom an unrelenting sun  
So long ago burned fiery dun  
In hateful Indian clime?

Surely I never wore a frill  
With many a curious pleated quill,  
Like paper round a flower!  
A little Philip Sidney sure,  
A boyish saint so meek and pure,  
Heedless of Pride and Power.

And had I ever hair to flow  
To every breeze that chose to blow?  
Behold this ivory ball!  
Time's cannoned off it many a day;  
I've had my rubs in Life's rough play,  
Yet seldom won at all.

"Bald as a coot"—such is the phrase  
They use in these degenerate days  
To mock at reverend age.  
Ha! little hair is left, you see,—  
Time pats our heads so heavily  
Before we're fully sage.

'T was in the days of Wellington  
I donned that suit called "Skeleton":  
I see it once again.  
Like little Tommy in the book,  
I'm reading gallant Captain Cook  
Beside the rolling main.

Yes! so the painter drew the child  
Who longed to tempt the surges wild  
And seek fresh golden lands.  
Since then by cruel breakers crossed,  
I have been wrecked and tempest-tossed,  
And run on countless sands.

All I've discovered is but that  
The world is round and I am flat,  
And Hope a coloured bubble;  
Love a mere mirage of the heart,  
And thinking but a painful art  
To magnify Life's trouble:

That men are moths; Ambition fire  
That scorches fools who would draw nigher,  
Striving to win a name:  
I have been singed (I know) myself,  
Yet seeking Honour and not Pelf,—  
These scars are from the flame!

I've learned some secrets—that the True  
And Good were stable, though there blew  
Care's tiger winds by dozens—  
That Work's a remedy for care,  
Better than any change of air;  
That Want and Sloth are cousins.

Ha! what a giddy race I've run,  
Since shone upon me childhood's sun,  
And what a reel unwound!  
Who would have thought that rosy face  
Would ever fix in such grimace  
And be in leather bound?

No smooth pure ivory my brow;  
It's ploughed and trenched and wrinkled  
now,  
And whitened with Grief's dredger.  
With many lines drawn on account  
To swell the terrible amount  
In Time's remorseless ledger.





### Faces in the Fire.

I SIT and brood beside my fire,  
 Watching the red coals change their shape :  
 Through waving flames rise gates and towers,  
 Black eyeballs stare, and hot mouths gape ;  
 While dreaming I spin rhyme on rhyme  
 Of dewfall and the Summer-time.

The red flames stir like dragon stings,  
 Or Devil's arrows barbed with red ;  
 I stab the fire's heart—hot the rain  
 That falls from veins that branch and spread ;  
 And then I doze, or spin a rhyme  
 Of dewfall and green Summer-time.

So pass my midnights : shadows dance  
 Upon the wainscot silently ;

*"LEFT HIS HOME."*

---

They shape the future—bow and point—  
I let the sable creatures be ;  
And careless sit and spin my rhyme  
Of dewfall and the Summer-time.

Sometimes from dark nooks in the room  
Glides forth my oldest skeleton,—  
Comes silent and sits by the fire,  
His hands upon his knees of bone ;  
While shuddering still I weave my rhyme  
Of dewfall and hot Summer-time.

I and that dreaded friend of mine  
Sit staring at the crimson fire :  
Whate'er I do, he moveth not,  
Watching the midnight's funeral pyre,  
As through long lonely hours I rhyme  
Of dewfall and sweet Summer-time.

---

*"Left his Home."*

HE left us all one bright June dawn,  
Taking his watch down from the nail,  
Just as he always used to do ;  
Leaning his hoe against the rail  
As he turned round to kiss our George  
(Who ran to push the gate), and bent  
A curious kind of look at me  
And little Bessy, as he went.

He picked a tuft of hollyhock,  
Then gave a sigh, and one more look,  
As 'yont the elm-tree in the lane  
The shuddering willows three times shook.  
I heeded not the warning then.  
'T was ten years since, this very day,  
That Robert left us all alone,  
And took yon path, the Hindon way.

Sometimes, when 'mid the brooding mists  
That shroud the valley and the lake,  
Looms through the golden harvest moon,  
And glows o'er down, and hill, and brake,  
I think I see him in the dusk,  
When George is playing at the door,  
And spring to meet his welcoming arms,  
As I have done so oft before.

Or some morn in the harvest-time,  
As when he left me, he will come,  
Meeting me down a row of sheaves ;  
And we shall hurry laughing home,  
And wake our boy with kisses, then  
He'll take his favourite seat and tell  
Of his mysterious wanderings,  
And what the day he left befell.

*“LEFT HIS HOME.”*

Sometimes I dream I see a man,  
His back towards me, by a brook  
Full of swift-darting trout, whose fins  
Flash past the weed-drifts as I look.

A dying fish flaps on the grass—  
Then, led by something that I see,  
I steal still closer to his side :  
He turns. O gracious God, 't is he !



Or—think not of it, my worn heart !  
Some Winter's night, when I am old,  
There 'll come a beggar lame and bent,  
And pale and shivering with the cold.

And when I bring him to the fire,  
He 'll call me by the fondling name  
He used to twenty years ago,—  
Oh, should I know him if he came ?

## THE SKELETON.

Dear George, if father should return  
When I am under churchyard grass,  
Tell him how oft I spoke of him,  
And take him there, that he may pass  
Near where I lie asleep, and see  
If the tears fall for her he left.  
Oh, agony of lingering grief!—  
Yet, George, I am not quite bereft.

## The Skeleton.

THIS hollow brainpan's like a pod,  
The seed shook out; yet here a God  
Dwelt for awhile, and through those eyes  
Looked at the world with strange surmise.

Whether a murderer or king,  
A parasite or baser thing,  
Thou'dst hope in youth, despair when old,  
Great joy, and misery untold;

And look'dst as if all seen was old,  
And life only a tale re-told.  
With eyes of deep inquiry fixed;  
Eyes—clay, with fiery essence mixed.

This head once like a blossom rose,  
The flower the gardener's skill that shows,  
The crown of this our human frame,  
Full of all beauty tongue can name.

Where's now the heart, the fount of blood,  
The spring of life's pulsating flood—  
The heart that, till death's fevers parch,  
Beats still its solemn funeral march?

And where the crystal globes, though small,  
Type of the planets, one and all,  
Those windows of the human face,  
The soul's peculiar dwelling-place?

Was this the head that thoughts conceived,  
This hand to execute the deed?  
The sinful mouth is passed away,  
The workman hand is sodden clay.

The brow, so furrowed with long pain,  
Is passed into the earth again,  
Swift as the last star fades in fear,  
Hearing exulting chanticleer.

No longer runs the branching vein  
Where life and heat had once their reign,  
Till death's cold torpor froze the flood,  
And spread its opiate through the blood.

Could flesh and colour e'er enthrone  
These dry brown pipes of porous bone—  
This skull, the hovel of the mind,  
To will, to loosen, and to bind?

“Ungainly scaffold for mere use”—  
So runs a flippant fool's abuse;  
Behold the first sketch of the man,  
The outline of God's mighty plan!

First take a root, and then exclaim:  
“What! this the rose that poets name  
‘The king of flowers’?” Let beauty sheathe  
The basement bones, nor look beneath.

THE ANGLER'S SONG.

"Wait till the crimson life-blood warms,  
Clothe first with flesh the ruder forms ;  
Give me the bloom that pulsing glows,  
And paints the cheeks with living rose.

"Or let the blue of Summer nights  
Fill the full eye with shifting lights ;  
Nor praise this outline of a man,  
This bony scaffold's ghastly plan."

These bones, thou fool, have owned a God,  
And felt the death-stroke of His rod ;  
Love, hate, and joy together filled  
These veins, that once both thought and willed.

An angel from this house of clay,  
Released by death, has fled away ;  
The fire's gone out, the door's ajar—  
This aërolite was once a star.

The Angler's Song.

WHERE the bulrush bows and bobs—

Bob, bob,

By the spongy osier-bed ;  
Where the rushes are brown-red ;  
Where the willows bend and weep ;  
Where the fat carps snort and sleep ;  
Where the otters rob ;

Patient waiting for the float—

For the float,

All vermillion, round, and swimming  
Where the deepest tide is brimming ;  
Where the dragon-fly is skimming ;  
Where the water-lily's swimming  
Round my flopping boat—

There I watch the bobbing float—

Bobbing float ;

Where the sallow fawn is drinking ;  
Where the swallow sets me thinking ;  
Where the water's clear and blue,  
And the gravel shineth through,  
Round my shallow boat.

Where the rushes move and stir ;  
Where the pigeon's in the fir,  
Where its brooding mother's song  
Murmurs love the whole day long,  
All above the branching oaks,  
'Neath which the water-lily soaks—

I bob, bob, bob—

Bob, bob, bob,

Like Job, not caring for jokes.

Where my red float down the stream  
Poises o'er the ponderous beam ;  
Where the perche's thorny fin  
Pricks the sullen otter's skin,  
And the bars upon his back  
Show the zebra gold and black ;  
Where above the bosoming dell  
Stands the buck, to snort and "bell"—

I bob, bob, bob—

Bob, bob, bob,

Passing my time so happy and well.



## The Philosopher of the Garden.

I SIT beneath a fluttering beech ;  
The leaves like Rumour's tongues are stirring ;  
Though inarticulate their speech,  
Their prophecies are all unerring.

Could I but shape them into words—  
Yet why forestall a coming sorrow ?  
My motto's *Carpe diem*. Birds,  
Sing to me of a happy morrow.

Speak to me through your perfumes, flowers,  
Of Lucy ; let the limes  
Fling down their blossoms in sweet showers  
Upon me, as in olden times.

Love, send me omens of success—  
Some golden cloud like melting amber,  
Or sunbeam ray of happiness,  
O'er Fortune's crags to guide my clamber.

To-day, I win a priceless gem ;  
Or bankrupt, beggared, and rejected,  
The dusk will see my diadem  
Of hope cast off, forlorn, dejected.

I shall sit here beneath the stars,  
Watching the bats flit o'er the laurels ;  
Railing at Venus, chiding Mars,  
Hating the very thrush that carols.

Yet till my fate has come, I love  
The orchard flowers still upward floating,  
While greedy bees the thyme above  
On their uncounted gains are gloating.

Bring round my horse : I linger still ;  
Fear makes me hesitate and ponder ;  
The clouds go pulsing o'er the hill :  
Will Lucy be at home, I wonder ?

The present still is mine ; indeed,  
All is still sunshine ; quicker, swallow,  
Sweep in long curves across the mead,  
Yet I'll spin faster down the hollow.

Upon that standard rose in bloom  
A bud has opened since I lingered ;  
Its blush like Lucy's—how the room  
Grew merrier last night, when she fingered

That wild Mazurka, goblin tune—  
Mad witches dancing round a gibbet  
In storm and thunder, till the moon  
Laughed out.—Where did the fellow crib it ?

And then the mill-stream's rippling flow,  
*Dolce, cantabile*—it rambled  
By moonlit willows row on row—  
O'er floating lilies now it gambolled.

No colour on a passing cloud,  
No sunbeam moving 'cross a shadow,  
But brings a memory of her—proud,  
Sing like her, bird in lustrous meadow.

Breeze, pulse from rolling field to field ;  
Glad sunshine, brighten all the clover :  
I feel a knight with spear and shield ;  
With hopes and fears my heart runs over.

Light as a swallow in the air,  
Gay as a butterfly on roses—  
The man is bringing round the mare ;  
This child this very hour proposes.



### *Jobe's Calendar.*

THE rose in the sunshine, dearest !  
Is whispering sweet to me ;  
The fairest things bring nearest  
The memory of thee.

I think of thy voice when thrushes  
Are singing their bridal song,  
And violets round the bushes  
Spread in a purple throng.

I think of thee when May's portal  
(The rainbow arch of heaven)  
Seems like a glimpse to mortal  
Of vanished Eden given.

I think of thee when Death scatters  
The yellow leaves in showers,  
And the fretful rain-drop patters  
In the grey autumnal hours.

*SEA-SIDE HEXAMETERS.*

---

I thought of thee, love ! when Winter  
Hung crystals on each spray,  
And when the red oak splinter  
Scared night's grim ghosts away.

I thought of thee when dark treason  
Plotted each wind that blew.  
But why detail each season?—  
I love the whole year through !

---

*Sea-side Hexameters.*

I.

MANY-FOOTED and swift the trampling waves of the ocean,  
Breast to breast, rising and falling, leap on to the battle ;  
White-maned and fierce, three deep, fleet as the steeds of the prairie ;  
White-maned, tameless, and swift as the raging horse of the Tartar ;  
Level in rank, unsaddled, unbridled, unriden by any,  
For none but the angel of wrath can bestride them, or rein them.  
In madness, incessant, they dash on the jutting horns of the headlands,  
Fierce as the patriot Swiss on the lances of tyrannous Hapsburgh.  
White froth tossed from their lips like the slaver of madmen in fetters,  
Pressing to shore as far as the eye can discover, they gather,  
Hurrying on with a deafening shout, like the spearmen of Cæsar,  
The white cliffs of Britain his goal, when he prayed kneeling down for a moment,  
Then leaped on through the surf, deriding the hurtling arrows.  
Lit by the flare of his torch, and the threatening glare of the beacons,  
And with a cry to Mars the legions from Egypt strode after,—  
Far in the distance the sea calls back its broken battalions,  
Dyed red in the sunset, as stained with the gore of an onset.  
Multitudinous, routed and baffled, now seaward they're plunging,  
As the sun indeed were a bale-fire, and the Saxons were rising,  
At the cry of the bands of the heathen, the Danes and the Norsemen.  
Some are whispering hope, with a ceaseless murmurous music,  
Others moaning with pain, but a few still mad for the battle.—  
Thou, mighty ocean, though in calm or in storm, resteth never.  
Grey and cloudy the sea, sky and water are blended together ;



*SEA-SIDE HEXAMETERS.*

---



No glitter of cloud or of star, no glimpse of the level horizon,  
Yet still on the shore you hear the long deep roll of thy thunder.  
The white mist rose from the bay, but the tumult hoarse and cavernous  
Ceases not ever, though the stars in the wet sand's reflected.

*SEA-SIDE HEXAMETERS.*

---

The night gives place to the dawn, now flowing, now turning and ebbing ;  
Red shine the clouds on the beach like the glare of a gathering beacon ;  
But still plunge ever the waves with a deep diapason majestic,  
As far from the din and the roar, and the feverish tumult of cities,  
I watch the wave pressing smooth, the hard sand hollowed and ribbed.  
Ay, for the planks of the ship the sea-worm and canker hath fretted  
Ay, for the mast-bedded deep, and firm in the labouring sea-drift ;  
Ay, for the pennon of crimson the slippery dark weed hath tangled ;  
Ay, for the twine of the cable, now loosened, and shredded, and sodden ;  
Rough with the sea-shell, crisping and white with the glittering crystals ;  
Scurfed with the salt, and green and brown with wet glistening ribbons  
Of bladder weed, and branch of the uprooted trees of the ocean.  
Deep lie the dead in the slope where the sand heaps in furrows and hollows ;  
Close and swelling and soft as the snow in the clustering mountains.  
Wail on, O sea, and mourn for the creatures you slay in your anger.  
God made us both, ocean and man : then why dost thou harm us ?  
Or why is thy cry full of sorrow, now shriller, now deeper ?  
Why in thy voice are contained all the choking shrieks of the drowning ?  
Heaving and leaping above us, splash, roaring and shouting, the breakers,  
Beware of the surf in the bay, beware of the reefs to the leeward.  
The waves climb up on the shore, but howling and ceaselessly falling  
Back from the buttressed walls of their prison, a dungeon eternal.

II.

ROAR. ye dumb giants, gasping, howling, and moaning, yet wordless,  
Your cry is no neigh of the war-horse, but of spirits in torture,  
Despairing, but bent on destruction, resolved upon conquest ;  
No hope, but a moaning of anguish, no scream of the terrible onset ;  
No ! but a dauntless despair and a courage and vigour undying ;  
Impotent—true—against God, but stormy and cruel and wrathful ;  
Feeding on man, wretched man, and tossing the dead in derision ;  
A prey for the fish and the birds, a sport to the tides and the currents,  
Thy step to the shore is the slow irresistible step of the lion.  
Blind is thy wrath, thou art deaf to the prayer of the wretched and drowning ;  
White with thy foam is the fluttering wing of the chattering sea-bird,  
That flits and hovers around the raft, and the faint and the sinking.  
Level, and barren, and waste, broad as the mighty Atlantic ;  
Vast, and level, and dim, shapeless, and veined with broad shadows.  
Thou art obedient still to a nameless, majestical presence ;  
Restless as heart of a spirit, still pulsing and throbbing and breathing ;  
Many may sleep on the reef, or the raft, that approaches the whirlpool ;  
The gull folds its wings in the evening, the fisher the sail of his pinnacle.

*SEA-SIDE HEXAMETERS.*



Many-voiced ocean, far-sounding, foam-crowned, billowy, surging,  
Deep is thy roar, as the tumult of gathering nations revolting ;  
Vast, and boundless, and level, and waste thy watery prairies,  
Stemming the rocks in the bay, thy waves hurry on like bold swimmers ;  
Tossing the spray and the froth, in the sunlight prismatic it flashes,  
While the long deep roll of thy tide washes over its torrents.  
The keystone of the arch of the rainbow's the throne of the Father,  
But its triple shaft, shedding light, rooteth deep as thy caverns,  
Ere it smoulders away like a dream in the flames of the sunset.  
Red shines the light on the sand like the glimmering flare of a beacon,  
Warning the seaman in storm of the shore and its breakers and danger.

*SEA-SIDE HEXAMETERS.*

---

The gull o'er the beach, floating and flapping, pursueth his shadow,  
And the boatmen, aged and blind, listen with joy to the storm-wind,  
Telling tales to each other of wreck on those shores, and of danger;  
Flickering blue, like a flame dyed with the colour of heaven,  
The crystal, wavering sea, restless with dimple and ripple,  
Grows cloudy and grey, toward the evening, stormy and wrathful,  
Inky, and streaked with dark green, threatening, white with its foam-crest;  
No longer creeps up to the shore with the murmuring voice of a lover,  
Whispering and wooing and gentle, in dusk of the glimmering twilight,  
But stormy and fierce as a knight at the ebony gate of a giant,  
Cursing Mahommed, and vowing to heap up despair and destruction  
On Soldan, and Paynim and hound, by the help of the guardian angels,  
By the help of our Lady the Virgin, the saints, and confessors, and martyrs.  
The old grey tower on the cliff stands like a crumbling landmark,  
Dark through the mists of the eve, silver-flamed in the mellowing moonlight,  
Now red, and burning, and bright, a pillar of fire in the sunset;  
On the shore the waves break in with the foam of the breakers dyed crimson,  
Like the surf that pours in on the swamps of the black Malebolge,  
The cry of whose waves is the howl of the creatures in lingering torment—  
Of Cain, Holofernes, and Herod, Ananias, Sapphira, and Judas.  
They leap up high, and curvet with the proud-crested neck of a war-horse;  
And around the ambient air is filled with their loud acclamations,  
For the sea has voices of woe, as well as of wrath and of anger—  
Amid all the roar and the foam, I hear the hoarse shells of the Tritons;  
See the nymphs diving and soaring, flashing like swallows in æther,  
Heralds of Neptune, the long green mane of whose trampling horses  
I can discern through the waves that the sun makes bright and transparent;  
Glaucus, and Sylla, and Circe, the Syrens, and daughters of Nereus,  
Trapped in rich fetters of shells, and the crimson fibres of sea-weed,  
Led by the winds, and lulled by the voice of the creatures of ocean,  
Who follow behind as the flocks do the pipe and the hurrying shepherd.  
Proteus drives after them all the glittering shoals of the tunny,  
For already the spears are sharpened, the eager fisherman, waiting,  
Prays to the Gods of the Ocean, adoring with frequent libation;  
Soon shall his sail brace out with the favouring gale from the western,  
His prey come rolling and leaping and sporting and gleaming to windward;  
Food for the hearth and the altar, food for the long nights of Winter.  
Beware of the ledge of the rock, black and jagged as the snout of a monster,  
Glimmering, frothy, and white as a shark's teeth glitter and glisten;  
And beyond, dark as backs of the whales in the ocean antarctic,  
Deep in the sand-troughs, blindly the billows welter and wallow.  
The waves, like the Magi, bring presents, but not of red gold and of spices,  
For their gifts are unworthy and base, deluding, and scornful, and mocking:  
Sea-weed and leaves that are torn from the wavering forests of ocean;

TEMPLE BAR.

---

Shells, empty and loathsome, and pebbles bright coloured as jewels,  
Washings of sand, bright silt, grit, coloured and sparkling and golden ;  
Or, pale and shroudless, the dead, borne on the wandering billow,  
The dead of a region unknown, the driftings of gale and of tempest,  
Washed up on the land as in scorn, with a roar of derision ;  
At night when the star on the cliff seems to answer the lights on the water,  
Far from the din, and the roar, and the feverish tumult of cities.

---

Temple Bar.

ONCE more I greet thee, Temple Bar,  
That hast so often, from afar,  
    Risen amid my dreams ;  
When avalanches round me roared,  
Or where the Tagus, sunlit, poured  
    Its stately golden streams ;

And where, above the torrent-bed,  
The Alp-peaks flushed with rosy red  
    The sunset dyes arrayed ;  
And where, below on lily banks,  
The half-wild goats in straggling ranks  
    Fed, leaped, or, butting, played ;

And even where Niagara roared,  
And, like a final deluge, poured  
    Majestically calm ;  
And where arose the Pyramid,  
At starry twilight almost hid,  
    And waved the lonely palm.

Well I remember all thy ways,  
The glimmering, horny light that plays  
    Around thy window-panes ;  
Thy posture-making kings, and she  
Who brought proud Spain upon his knee,  
    And still up yonder reigns.

No grinning traitors' heads on poles  
Strike terror now to Tory souls,  
    (Thank God, those days are altered !)  
A statesman now may lose his head  
Many a year before he's dead,  
    Long ere his last word's faltered.

How often, like a furnace mouth,  
I've seen in days of Summer drouth  
    Thy archway flaming red  
With sunset crimsons fold on fold,  
That turned the Strand to burning gold,  
    Then darkened overhead.

And on how many a fairy night  
I've seen the sprinkling silver light  
    Transmute thy royalty ;  
Invest thy kings with saintly gleams,  
Crowning with halo of moonbeams  
    Thy transient majesty.

Few burly Doctor Johnsons now  
At midnight bend their chiding brow  
    On Boswells reeling home ;  
Nor Goldsmith curses German kings,  
And wishes, among other things,  
    For Chevalier from Rome.

---

### AUTUMN PICTURES.

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Yes, Chatterton has lingered here,  
Gazing upon a sky, dark, drear,  
Holding his bated breath;  
While moonshine blanched the windowed  
arch,  
That howling, bitter night in March,  
He pondered upon death.  
  
Still, luckless Chattertons, alas!  
Through this dark gate of Time will pass,  
Forced by their cruel star;

And many Boswells, Johnson led,  
Will pass through you when I am dead,  
To heavens that lie afar.

Great arch of Time's swift rolling river,  
It makes my blood in ague shiver,  
To think how fast life's flowing;  
And how our little frail canoes,  
No bigger than a giant's shoes,  
Sink ere we know they're going.

---

### Autumn Pictures.

#### I. EVENING.

THE grass is dank with twilight dew;  
The sky is throbbing thick with stars—  
I see the never-parted Twins,  
And, guarding them, the warrior Mars;  
High, too, above the dark elm-trees,  
Glitter the sister Pleiades.  
  
No foot upon the quiet bridge—  
No foot upon the quiet road;  
No bird stirs in the covert walks;  
Only the watchman is abroad.  
From distant gate, the mastiff's bark  
Comes sounding cheerly through the  
dark.

The hazel leaves, black velvet now,  
Rise patterned 'gainst the twilight sky;  
The restless swallow sleeps at last,  
The owl unveils its luminous eye;  
Our cottage like a lighthouse shines  
From out its covering of vines.

I know above my lamp-lit room  
The kindly angel-stars are watching,  
O'er the long line of dark-ridged roof,  
Far over gable-end and thatching;  
And now I blow the light out—pray,  
Dear wife, for him who's far away.

#### II. MORNING.

With Hope renewed, with fresher love,  
With heart revived and brighter eyes,  
Now Morning glitters in the grass;  
Now gladsome thought, I 'gin to rise.  
The lawn is blooming dewy grey,  
Flower-like expands the golden day.

The robin on the mountain ash  
His morning hymn sings sweet to me;  
High on the topmost twig alone  
He carols, calm, clear, jocundly.  
The yellow leaves around him fall;  
From distant fields the blackbirds call.



One rose, on this grey Autumn day,  
Blooms with a steadfast flame,  
Like other flowers in slow decay,  
Going to whence they came :  
Like swarms of golden butterflies,  
The dead leaves fill October skies.

*OUR VILLAGE AT DAYBREAK.*

---

Through ceaseless golden rain of leaves,  
The market carts jog by,  
While morning clouds, go, fraught with light,  
In order through the sky.  
The trees, with hushed and bated breath,  
Are waiting silently for death.

The bees are on the ivy bloom,  
Blythe as in April-time ;  
The gathering swallows on the roofs  
Look toward another clime,  
Teaching us all that, proud or meek,  
We too another home must seek.

---

**O**ur **V**illage at **D**aybreak.

'T IS daybreak over the village ; I look from the rustic inn,  
And watch the widening sunshine its day's bright march begin,  
As the burnished clouds turn fiery red, and the lark awakes his kin.

In the very heart of the village, where the double hammer rings,  
You hear the joyful blackbird in the parson's croft that sings,  
Where the thankless wasp sucks at the grapes, yet, while they feed him, stings.

The cobbler, up an hour ere dawn, carols long psalms all through,  
Stitching away with prying eyes at the miller's daughter's shoe ;  
She's the deftest foot in the country-side, and beauty enough for two.

The waggon-team went jingling out a good half-hour ago ;  
The sturdy lad, who smacked the whip, seemed to be all of a glow ;  
The ploughman's horses stride along, broad-chested, in a row.

The cock crows shrill ; the lark is up, the rooks are loud on the tree ;  
The flowers are out ; the brook chirps on, each happy in its degree ;  
And the ripples of red run over the sky as the wind shouts in its glee.

Now the doors slip back their trusty bolts, and the shutters rattle down ;  
Glad faces look up at the morning sky, and voices fill the town,  
While drowsy girls at the village pump brim up the pitcher brown.

Day's up ; and I must sally out for many a happy mile,  
Through flowery lanes, by river-sides, resting at many a stile,  
(A vagrant artist, on the tramp), and singing all the while.



## Friend Robin.

LITTLE Robin, Wild Bird,  
Singing sweet and blythe ;  
Careless of Time's hour-glass  
And his crooked scythe.  
Prodigal of pleasure  
In a harmless way,  
Greeting in the sunshine  
This thy holiday.

When the orphan children  
Wandered in the wood,  
We shall still remember  
Thou wert kind and good.  
As their cheeks grew paler,  
And with tears were wet,  
Thou didst sprinkle o'er them  
Many a violet.

Friendly bird and kindly,  
In the chilly caves  
Thou didst strew their corses  
With the mouldering leaves.  
Well the ancient poet,  
Greatly loving thee,  
Said thou wert the emblem  
Of sweet Charity.

While the scarlet poppies  
Burn among the corn,  
While the thrushes carol  
To the blue-eyed morn,  
Thou art hushed and silent :  
But when Summer's reign  
Ends, and leaves are falling,  
Thou art gay again.

Cheer us in the Autumn,  
When the rains begin,  
While the gay flowers wither,  
And the woods grow thin.  
Now that, half regretful,  
Red leaves drift along,  
Like an old friend's greeting,  
Comes thy little song.

Little Robin, Wild Bird,  
Gold tints every leaf,  
Sharp the frost comes nipping,  
And we've piled the sheaf.  
Now the flails are sounding  
On the threshing-floor,  
Let me sit and hear thee  
Singing by my door.

Friends we have in plenty  
In the Summer-time,  
But the swallow leaves us  
Ere the rain and rime.  
Thou alone art faithful  
In the mist and cold,  
Pleasant Winter carols  
Singing as of old.



## Smith of Maudlin.

MY chums will burn their Indian weeds  
The very night I pass away,  
And cloud-propelling puff and puff,  
As white the thin smoke melts away ;  
Then Jones of Wadham, eyes half-closed,  
Rubbing the ten hairs on his chin,  
Will say, "This very pipe I use  
Was poor old Smith's of Maudlin."

That night in High Street there will walk  
The ruffling gownsmen three abreast,  
The stiff-necked proctors, wary-eyed,  
The dons, the coaches, and the rest ;  
Sly "Cherub Sims" will then purpose  
Billiards, or some sweet ivory sin ;  
Tom cries, "He played a pretty game—  
Did honest Smith of Maudlin."

The boats are out!—the arrowy rush,  
The mad bull's jerk, the tiger's strength ;  
The Balliol men have wopped the Queen's—  
Hurrah ! but only by a length.  
Dig on, ye muffs ; ye cripples, dig !  
Pull blind, till crimson sweats the skin ;—  
The man who bobs and steers cries, "Oh  
For plucky Smith of Maudlin !"

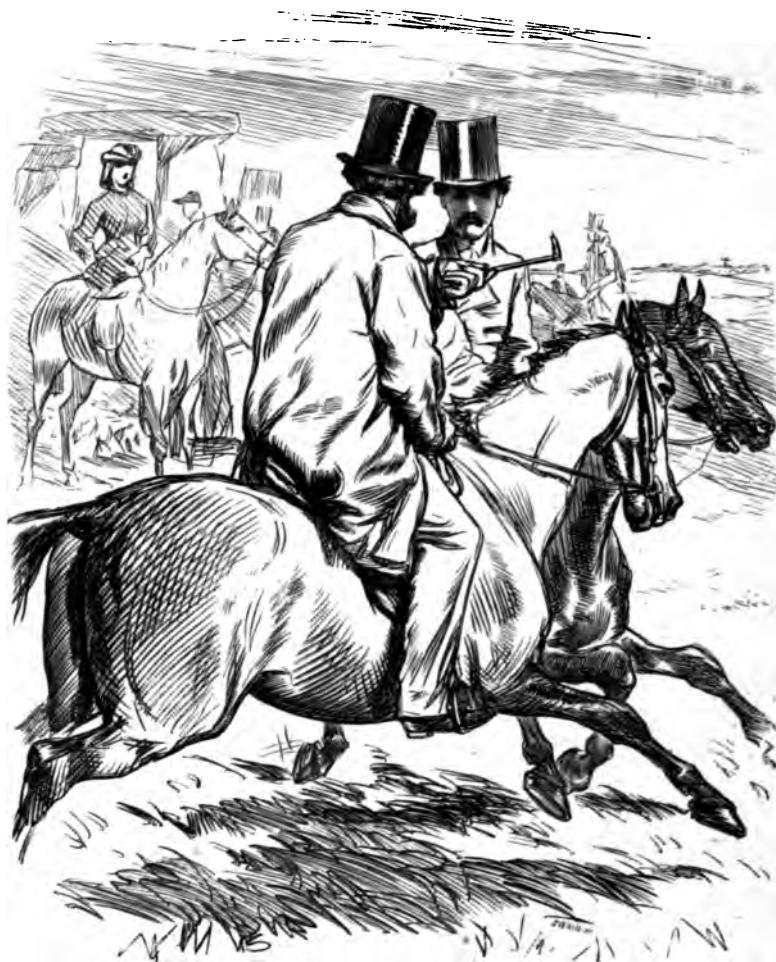
Wine-parties met—a noisy night,  
Red sparks are breaking through the  
cloud ;  
The man who won the silver cup  
Is in the chair erect and proud ;  
Three are asleep—one to himself  
Sings, "Yellow jacket's sure to win."  
A silence :—"Men, the memory  
Of poor old Smith of Maudlin !"

The boxing-rooms—with solemn air  
A freshman dons the swollen glove ;  
With slicing strokes the lapping sticks  
Work out a rubber—three and love ;  
With rasping jar the padded man  
Whips Thompson's foil, so square and  
thin,  
And cries, "Why, zur, you've not the wrist  
Of Muster Smith of Maudlin."

But all this time beneath the sheet  
I shall lie still, and free from pain,  
Hearing the bed-makers sluff in  
To gossip round the blinded pane ;  
Try on my rings, sniff up my scent,  
Feel in my pockets for my tin ;  
While one hag says, "We all must die,  
Just like this Smith of Maudlin."

Ah ! then a dreadful hush will come,  
And all I hear will be the fly  
Buzzing impatient round the wall,  
And on the sheet where I must lie ;  
Next day a jostling of feet—  
The men who bring the coffin in :  
"This is the door—the third-pair back,—  
Here's Mr. Smith of Maudlin !"





## Silver-Shoe.

MOLTON STEEPLE RACES. — 1858.

THE sky was dimpled blue and white,  
The west was leaden grey,  
Till in the east rose a fire of red,  
That burnt all the fog away.

The thorn-bush seemed new dipped in blood,  
The firs were hung with cones,  
The oaks were golden green with moss,  
The birch wore its silver zones.

The deer with skins of a velvet pile  
Were feeding under the boughs  
Of the oaks, that stretched their guarding arms  
Around the manor-house.

'T was "Oh!" for the glossy chestnut mare,  
And "Hurrah!" for the fiery roan,  
But the caps went up like a cloud in the air  
For SILVER-SHOE alone.

*SILVER-SHOE.*

We left the stable, where the door  
Was mailed with winners' shoes,  
And we trampled out to the crop-eared down  
By laughing ones and twos.

The diamond-seed of sprinkling dew  
From the firs was shaking down,  
As we cantered out by the dark thorned trees,  
And over the green hill crown.

The chestnut mare was dancing mad,  
The roan gave a snorting shout,  
But you never heard a rolling cheer  
Till SILVER-SHOE came out.

The starter waved his scarlet flag,  
And then we stole along,  
Past the line of rails and the nodding heads,  
And past the thicker throng.

Gathering up, we trod, we trod,  
Till like a boat well rowed,  
Together went our hoofs thrown out,  
So evenly we strode.

And now we skirt the crescent down,  
Past the crimson-spotted thorns,  
And away we go with a toss of hats  
And a driving blast of horns.

Pad, pad together went our hoofs,  
Ting, ting the rings and chains,  
Chat, chat, chatter over the stones,  
And splash through the red clay lanes.

A white froth rose on our horses' mouths,  
A lather on their hides,  
And soon blood-drops from the rowel pricks  
Oozed red from dripping sides.

There was a black mare, Yorkshire bred,  
And the strong-built Irish grey,  
But SILVER-SHOE was the only one  
To show them all the way.

Strong and wide was his massy chest,  
And bright his deep brown eye ;  
He could do anything but walk,  
And everything but fly.

I knew the music of his feet  
Over the hollow down :  
He was the chosen of the ten,  
And the pet of Salisbury town.

Over we went, like skimming birds,  
Clean over the wattled fence,  
And crash through the bristling purple hedge,  
With its thorny mailed defence.

The chestnut fell at the water leap,  
With its shining fourteen feet ;  
At the double rail the roan broke down,  
But the black mare was not beat.

Together went our double shoes,  
Together went our stride,  
Till I saw the blood in a crimson thread  
Run down Black Bessy's side.

I pushed him at the brook and hedge,  
And never touched a twig,  
But I shuddered to see a stiff strong fence  
That rose up bold and big.

Now ghastly rose the rasping fence,  
Broad yawned the ditch below :  
I gave him head, and gave him spur,  
And let my wild blood go.

The black was down, and I was clear,  
Though staggering and blown :  
As I rode in trusty SILVER-SHOE  
His saddle seemed a throne.

The sky was spinning like a wheel,  
The trees were waltzing too,  
As off I leaped, and clapped the flank  
Of the winner—SILVER-SHOE.



### Primrose Time and Snow Time.

I.

EVEN the dead leaves, old and brown,  
Were warm with the April sun ;  
And merry and bright, with their yellow light,  
The primroses, every one,  
Lit up the dappled hazel-stems,  
The moss, and the cuckoo-flowers.  
How little Cousin Madge and I  
Laughed out to see the showers !

*PRIMROSE TIME AND SNOW TIME.*

---

With the rainbow gleaming violet and green,  
As we bound each other with daisy-chains—  
I was the king and she was the queen;  
And thus we spent the hours.

II.

Leaves were turning, and Summer was gone.  
In bunches brown and spiked  
The filberts grew, and, a merry crew,  
We plundered where'er we liked.  
While others carolled, and danced, and sung,  
I drew dear Madge aside;  
And round her waist my hand I laced  
With a chosen lover's pride.  
In her gentle eyes I turned to look,  
I saw love hiding there.  
A kiss she gave and a kiss I took;  
Then came a word through the trembling air  
And she was my plighted bride.

III.

I stood beside her closing grave,  
But a single hour ago:  
The leaves fell dead, and overhead  
Bickered the ceaseless snow.  
White, white it fell on the new-turned earth,  
Pure as her parted soul;  
With shuddering gasps of bursting tears,  
I heard the death-bell toll.  
No more for me the primrose time,—  
My heart lies confined there;  
Sorrow's tempest and age's rime  
Alone I must suffer and bear,  
Until I reach my goal.



## The Bells of Avignon.

AVIGNON was a joyous city,  
A joyous town with many a steeple,  
Towers and tourelles, roofs and turrets,  
Sheltering a merry people.  
In each tower, the bells of silver,  
Bronze, or iron, swayed so proudly,  
Tolling deep and swinging cheerly,  
Beating fast and beating loudly.

One ! Two ! Three ! Four ! ever sounding ;  
Two ! Four ! One ! Three ! still repeating ;  
Five ! Seven ! Six ! Eight ! hurrying, chasing ;  
BIM-BOM-BING-BANG merry beating.  
All the day the dancing sextons  
Dragged at bell-ropes, rising, falling ;  
Clanging bells, inquiring, answering,  
From the towers were ever calling.

Cardinals, in crimson garments,  
Stood and listened to the chiming ;  
And within his lofty château  
Sat the Pope, and beat the timing ;  
Minstrels, soldiers, monks, and jesters  
Laughed to hear the merry clamour,  
As above them in the turrets  
Music clashed from many a hammer.

Avignon was a joyous city :  
Far away across the bridges,  
'Mong the vine-slopes, upward lessening,  
To the brown cliffs' highest ridges,  
Clamoured those sonorous bells ;  
In the Summer's noontide wrangling,  
In one silver knot of music  
All their chimes together tangling.

Showering music on the people  
Round the town-house in the mornings ;  
Scattering joy and jubilations,  
Hope and welcome, wrath and scorning ;

Ushering kings, or mourning pontiffs ;  
Clanging in the times of thunder,  
And on nights when conflagrations  
Clove the city half asunder.

Nights and nights across the river,  
Through the darkness starry-dotted,  
Far across the bridge so stately,  
Now by lichens blurred and blotted,  
Came that floating, mournful music,  
As from bands of angels flying,  
With the loud blasts of the tempest  
Still victoriously vieing.

Who could tell why Avignon  
All its bells was ever pealing,—  
Whether to scare evil spirits,  
Still round holy cities stealing ?  
Yet, perhaps, that ceaseless chiming,  
And that pleasant silver beating,  
Was but as of children playing,  
And their mother's name repeating.

One ! Two ! Three ! the bells went prattling,  
With a music so untiring ;  
One ! Two ! Three ! in merry cadence,  
Rolling, crashing, clanging, firing .  
Hence it was that in past ages,  
When 'mid war those sounds seemed sweeter,  
*La Ville Sonnante* people called it,  
City sacred to Saint Peter.

Years ago ! but now all silent,  
Lone and sad, the grass-grown city  
Has its bell-towers all deserted  
By those ringers—more's the pity.  
Pope and cardinal are vanished ;  
And no music fills the night air ;  
Gone the red robes and the sable ;  
Gone the crosier and the mitre.

## The Old World and the New.

THERE's a checkmate universal  
In this blind old world of ours,  
The earth has lost its vigour,  
Men's brains have lost their powers.

Alas! for the young fruits blighted,  
And the flowers that cannot bloom!  
Alas! for the lack of air and of sun,  
Alas! for the lowering gloom.

Alas! for the thirsty barrens,  
And the moors that yield no corn!  
Alas! for the lingering harvests,  
And the still-delaying morn!

By millions starve the beggars  
Around the untilled downs,  
And the orphans weep in the alleys  
Of the rich and sumptuous towns.

There's a checkmate universal,  
In this deaf old world of ours,  
The earth has lost its vigour,  
Men's brains have lost their powers.

Yet I hear an angel crying,  
"Away to the Virgin Land,  
Away to the boundless prairie,  
Fresh from God's shaping hand."

And I see the Eastern sunbeams  
Point to the broad free West,  
And I watch the sea-birds leading  
To the golden realms of rest.

There's a checkmate universal,  
In this dumb old world of ours,  
The earth has lost its vigour,  
Men's brains have lost their powers.

Yet I know the flowering prairies  
Shall soon roll with the ripening grain,  
And the merry streams flow lavish  
Over the desert plain.

Break up old types, my brothers,  
Pave roads with Pharaoh's bones,  
Hew from the pyramids of the Past  
The Future's temple stones.

---

## Dayrise and Sunset.

(A SONG.)

WHEN Spring casts all her swallows forth  
Into the blue and ambient air,  
When lilacs toss their purple plumes  
And every cherry-tree grows fair,—  
Through fields with morning tints a-glow  
I take my rod and singing go.

Where lilies float on broad green leaves  
Below the ripples of the mill,  
When the white moth is hovering  
In the dim sky so hushed and still,  
I watch beneath the pollard ash  
The greedy trout leap up and splash.





Or down where golden water-flowers  
Are wading in the shallower tide,  
While still the dusk is tinged with rose  
Like a brown cheek o'erflushed with pride—  
I throw the crafty fly, and wait;  
Watching the big trout eye the bait.

## SNOW CRYSTALS.

---

It is the lover's twilight-time,  
And there's a magic in the hour,  
But I forget the sweets of love  
And all love's tyranny and power,  
And with my feather-hidden steel  
Sigh but to fill my woven creel.

Then upward darkling through the copse  
I push my eager homeward way,  
Through glades of drowsy violets  
That never see the golden day.  
Yes! while the night comes soft and slow,  
I take my rod and singing go.

---

## Snow Crystals.

THREE foot lies the Winter snow; hark! the night-wind whispers low,  
Like the voice of one who watches by the newly-coffined dead.  
Now the landmarks are all gone, and the white tide, deep and strong,  
Rises, like a second deluge, hiding paths we used to tread.

"Will it," says the village child, to her grandam kind and mild,  
"Bury all, and heap above us, in one wide and common grave,  
Rising over hedge and wall, slowly, till it cover all,  
As above the host of Pharaoh rose the Red Sea's turbid wave?"

"No, my little fairy child," says the grandam kind and mild,  
"Good and gentle is the angel from whose wings shake down the snow:  
Not a single fragile flower but he guards it from the shower;  
Much more, then, earth's feathered creatures from the icy winds that blow."

Heavy on the roofs and ridges, on the lattice-sills and ledges,  
Loading every branch, and clinging to the trunk and to the bough:  
Yonder, in the whitened furrow, like a monument of sorrow,  
Like a dead man in a desert, still unburied lies the plough.

In the dark the snow is sifting, in a white shower swiftly drifting,  
Like the seed the sower scatters from his rough and horny hand;  
See it heaving into waves, swelling into shapeless graves,  
Rippling into curves and frettings, like the ocean's silver sand.

How it hangs upon the eaves, how it clots upon the leaves,  
Crystal round the ruby berries and the green and glossy leaf,  
Clinging to the netted boughs, massing on the sloping house,  
Filling all the mind and feelings with a blank, unreasoning grief.

## *SNOW CRYSTALS.*

---

Heavy swathes upon the brier, rising every moment higher,  
Sloping in a massy buttress up against the old church wall,  
Hollowed into roadside caves by the night-wind's gnawing waves,  
Turning every roof to silver—hut and palace, farm and hall.

Through the altar window-pane, brown and dim with centuries' stain,  
Glares a whiteness, pale and ghastly, on the chancel-roof and floor,  
Like the glimmering of white from a shroud in the midnight  
On the face of frightened watcher listening to a creaking door.

Yet the snow-flakes in the sun glitter, glitter, one by one,  
As they melt in trickling dew-drops on the robin's crimson breast—  
As the bright-eyed, timid thrush, breaking sudden from the bush,  
Scatters in a shower the snow-flakes that have brimmed his last year's nest.

See the wild bird on the thorn, waiting for the peep of dawn,  
Guarding yonder ruby berry, like a magic talisman,  
Fluttered frightened at the snow rustling through the brake below,  
As the hare flew, scared and startled, from the coming steps of man.

When the passing waggons rumble, from the branch the masses tumble  
Heavy, when the cold wind's shaking every snow-enamelled tree,  
Filtering through the netted boughs, where the fluttering birds arouse  
From their chilly, frozen torpor, with a twittering of glee.

Crisp beneath the crushing foot, crusting round the shaky root,  
Now the swift hoofs drive the snow in a white dust all about,  
Like the frothing of a cup, when a yeoman brims it up,  
Like the white surf foaming, snorting, when the loud north-westerners shout.

Silent land of silent death, broken by no voice or breath,  
Now the shepherd's all night lighted by the glimmer from the snow;  
Muffled rolls the wheel by day, hollow sounds the watch-dog's bay,  
And the death-bell's booming cometh solemnly and slow.

Looking out into the night, all is one void blank of white,  
And the footprints of the birds are the only signs of life—  
One vast, broad, and level plain, where only Death and Silence reign,  
Foes to God, and foes to man, with all human things at strife.

As I look into the night, over hill and plain of white  
Comes a watchful angel's voice, clear yet softly through the dark,  
As the wind grows louder, higher, spreading like a prairie fire,  
And the elm shakes like the mainmast of a tempest-tossing bark.

*FIVE LESSONS FROM OLD SCHOOLMASTER NATURE.*

“Soon the south wind shall blow soft, breathing over glebe and croft,  
Soon the blue will slowly widen, and the air with music ring;  
And from out this snowy tomb, like a soul unto its doom,  
Shall the Spring leap up in gladness, and to GOD his praises sing!”

**F**ive Lessons from old Schoolmaster Nature.

LESSON I.

TEN years to build a house? The mushroom's roof  
In one night rises,  
And surprises  
The shepherd lout ere crushed beneath his hoof.

LESSON II.

Years to work one room full of tapestry?  
The rose's shoot  
Has grown a foot  
Since last night's rain. O Nature's majesty!

LESSON III.

Three years to fix on canvas a dead saint?  
Careless to-day  
Through earth made way  
The lily;—dullard, learn from it to subtly paint.

LESSON IV.

Poor prodigal! you toss your gold in showers away?  
The Autumn tree  
As recklessly  
Flings all its leaves; but they return in May.

LESSON V.

Kind Nature keeps for all of us a gentle school.  
Even the wise  
Through it may rise  
Still wiser. Sorrow and death alone can teach the fool.



### The Good People.\*

I.

WHERE the fern grew high and  
branching  
Above the moss and flowers,  
I crept as soft as a squirrel  
Hiding from Summer showers.

II.

I heard the fairy harpers  
Mimic the thrushes' song,  
Music to speed the dancing  
Of many an elfin throng.

III.

Quiet as hunter stealing  
Upon a sleeping roe,  
I stepped between the fir-trees,  
All marshalled row by row.

IV.

I pressed the pliant branches  
That hid the beech-tree dell,  
Where hung the trailing bindweed,  
And cords of ivy fell.

V.

I sought the greener darkness  
Through fern brakes on and on,  
Then broke from out the shadow;  
But the dancers all were gone.

VI.

The glow-worms led me falsely,  
The thrushes had betray'd,—  
The fairies heard the mortal  
Entering the magic glade.

\* By the Scotch the fairies are still called the "Good People."

*THE ALDERMAN'S FUNERAL.*

---

VII.

And so they fled for ever;  
In the enchanted ground  
I hear no more by day nor night  
The fairy music sound.

---

*The Alderman's Funeral.*

*(NEPHISTOPHILUS LOQUITUR.)*

BRING out the plumes that honour the dead,  
Mocking the mourner's bended head,  
From the top of the hearse that holds the dead  
And tell the mutes and all the grooms  
To mind and take care how they tread,  
And be sure the coachman's eyes are red.  
Don't splash the ends of the velvet pall,  
Nor let the dropping black fringe fall,  
Nor the mud-drops spatter you one and all.  
I know 't is hard to strain a grief  
On a cold and biting Autumn day,  
When the road is heavy with mud and clay,  
And the churchyard distant a terrible way,  
With an Alderman heavy some seventeen stone,  
A heap of fat,—a swollen tun.  
I find these supporters of Church and State  
Require support to the churchyard gate.  
As the soil was never so fit to weed,  
Nettles and other poisonous seed,  
Will be the mound over Alderman Vaughan,  
Who laughed both God man and to scorn,  
And yet, having plenty of money to lend  
At cent. per cent., made a holy end,  
Surrounded by many a weeping friend,  
And leaving an inconsolable wife,  
And four inconsolable orphans too,  
Who already are leading a cat and dog life,  
And squabbling over the legacies due.

### *THE ALDERMAN'S FUNERAL.*

---

What a feature it is of the present day,  
That every virtue is sold for pay!  
Men hire mourners—for half that die  
Would get no tears unless they bought  
The drops that fall from a hireling's eye.  
And these bought tears are just as salt  
As those of friends; and they look as real,  
Till we shut the door of No. II. vault,  
And pull off the cloaks and all the ideal,  
And pass the pot to moisten our clay,  
Quite run dry with the grief of the day.  
And the brittle pipe teaches us all how frail  
Man's tenure is—though the moral's stale.  
How the plumes of the pompous hearse  
Bend and mock, as we slowly pace  
Through the crowd to the cheapest burial-place,  
Where the sexton is itching to finger his fees  
All the while he is on his knees;  
And the parson thinks, while he looks at the mould,  
That his Christmas dinner is getting cold;  
And the parish boys think it jolly fun,  
And wish that every day "there was one;"  
And the urchin that runs for the key of the vault  
Throws a comical somersault,  
And thinks it a lark to see the graves  
Heaving up like the Dead Sea's waves.  
There's always a crowd for men's delight  
To see a corpse put out of sight,  
Snugly feeling themselves all right.  
It's quite a show: the old hag crows,  
And puts her spectacles on her nose.  
"We pay at the fairs for the puppet-shows,  
But this fine sight comes right to our doors,  
For no admittance fee is ours."  
"Come on," the crowd of the street folk roars:  
The funeral pomp quite rivals Punch,  
And the juggler in his tinsel tights;  
And the cripple, giving his crust a crunch,  
Hobble to see such solemn sights.  
I wonder that the mutes don't laugh  
As they stand at the dark silent door,  
When they hear within how the live men quaff,  
And fretfully over the torn will pore,  
And curse the dead, and spit on the floor.

THE ALDERMAN'S FUNERAL.

---

These plumes at half a sovereign each  
Make pride and sorrow count the cost,  
Calculate the coming bill,  
And look in the dead man's brimming till  
To see what tears they may dare to spill.  
Without this cost we should be in extremes,—  
Our gutters would run with tears in streams;  
Our very carpets would be of crape,  
The poodle himself would be dyed black,  
And we should *discard* the red toast-rack.  
Now the plumes waver and toss about  
Like the proud beauty at last night's rout—  
I think they are trying the dead to flout,  
Who, pale and calm, not heeding expense,  
Not caring how many piles of pence  
The heir who waited so patiently,  
Came so many a time to tea,  
Spends to show his grief and woe,  
Trying to keep the charges low;  
How he kissed the dog that bit his calf—  
At all bad jokes he strained a laugh;  
And, in fact, for three and twenty years  
Was a slave to the mingled hopes and fears.  
The dead man cares not now for waste,—  
But then the world is rather tight-laced,  
And expects a pious heir to spend  
A good round sum on a dying friend.  
He spends it, grudging it all the time,  
And quarrelling at the said long bill,  
And swearing his income is really *nil*!  
And "weren't the plumes a trifle dear?  
And couldn't they dock the sum for beer?"  
Then, knowing the whole wide world will see  
The one result of his piety,—  
By the world I don't mean the round world fair,  
But about one-half of Berkeley Square,—  
Pays "the bill" with a whispered oath,  
And tries to look as if nothing loth.  
Combined with gilded scrolls and show  
Is the epitaph of the broad tombstone;  
Showing "earth has one angel less,  
And heaven one more." His loneliness  
He represents with sigh and moan:—  
"A tender husband, a father fond,



### THE JESTER'S MORAL

---

Good citizen, and *faithful friend*.  
That is to say, he was ready to lend  
At cent. per cent., and never wronged  
Those whom he found it better paid  
To treat with justice in his trade.  
A tender husband (you well may start—  
His first wife died of a broken heart!)  
Oh! half the lies of this lying race  
Are written on stone in the burying-place;  
And the house of God is paved and lined  
With monuments of human shame;  
Proof of the baseness of men's mind,  
For tears are water—sighs are wind.

---

### The Jester's Moral.

[“All is vanity,” quoth the Jester: “Do not I find it written so, sirrah, by the wise King Ecclesiastes?”]

THE maiden is lacing her boddice,  
The jester is jingling his bells,  
The page he is vowing no Goddess  
On earth but that maiden there dwells;  
But the jester comes laughing behind him,  
And tinkles and tinkles his bells,  
Unmeaning but musical bells.

On his fist holds the baron his falcon,—  
Keen-eyed and sharp-clawed is the bird;  
The baron is dreaming of hawking,  
For of herms by the river he's heard;  
And the reaper of partridges tells.  
The jester comes creeping behind him,  
And o'er his grey head shakes the bells,  
Unmeaning but musical bells.

The steward who's counting his ducats,  
On his missal-clasps ringing the gold,  
Laughs sly at the page's fond toying,  
And sneers at the sports of the bold.

*TRUST IN GOD.*

---

While his groats and his pieces he tells,  
The jester comes slowly behind him,  
And shakes o'er the miser the bells,  
Unmeaning but musical bells.

The pantler, while counting the dishes,  
Two flagons together is clinking,  
He is eyeing the venison and fishes,  
And of noon and the banquet is thinking;  
While he buries his head in a jug,  
And smiles at the spices he smells,  
The jester comes jingling behind him  
Unmeaning but musical bells.

But the page, who has followed the scoffer,  
Catches suddenly hold of his bells,  
Leaping up on the steward's old coffer,  
Kicks down all the coin he tells,  
And over the head of the jester  
Shakes, laughing in triumph, the bells,  
Those meaning and musical bells.

---

**Trust in God.**

NATURE hath trust in GOD: from sheltering sheath  
No bud hath broken; scarce the tufted larch  
Its livelier green assumes; nor yet beneath  
Blossoms the flower that woke at shout of March:  
Yet every bird its varied nest is rearing,  
Amid dark sprays, scarce hidden, and appearing  
Bare to the searching wind and piercing rain.  
Unreasoning things that, trustful, ne'er refrain  
To build, nor yet to greet the reddening morn;  
They see each bud hath got its guardian thorn,  
And almond flowers deck the leafless bough;  
Bright kingcups strew with lavish gold the earth,  
Knowing that soon we must, with joyful brow,  
Hear the first cuckoo's monotone of mirth.



### Summer Idleness.

UNDER a "roof of pine,"  
To hear the ringdove brood,  
With the sorrow of love long past,  
Thrilling the listening wood ;

Deep 'mid the clustering firs,  
Where the nightingale sings all day,  
To hide in the darkness sweet,  
Where the sunbeam finds no way.

*THE EPICUREAN'S GARDEN.*

To ramble from field to field,  
Where the poppy is all on flame,  
All but the little black coal  
At its core, that's still the same ;  
And where the "speedwell" blue  
Cheers with its two kind words,  
And the wild rose burns with a blush  
At the flattery of the birds.

To bask on a grassy cliff,  
Lazily watching the sail,  
The blue plains of the deeper sea,  
And the shallows emerald pale ;  
The breezes' rippling track,  
And the sea-birds flickering white  
Athwart the rosy cloud,  
And under the golden light.

In the haycock sweet and dry,  
To lazily nestle down,  
When half the field is grey and shorn,  
And half the field waves brown ;  
'Mid the clumps of purple thyme,  
When the evening sky is red,  
To lie and rest on the flowers  
One's Epicurean head.

Or better, amid the corn  
To turn on one's lazy back,  
And see the lark upborne  
Over the drifting wrack ;  
To hear the field-mouse run  
To its nest in the swinging stalk ,  
And see the timorous hare  
Leap over the hedge-side walk.

Such are the Summer joys  
That Epicureans love ;  
Men with no morrow to heed,  
Heeding no cloud above :  
Grasshopper-men, that sing  
Their little Summer through,  
And when the Winter comes,  
Hide from the frost and dew.

Happy the man whose heart  
Is granite against Time's frost,  
Whose Summer of calm content  
In Autumn's never lost ;  
Who, when care comes with clouds  
That gather from east and west,  
Has still a changeless heart,  
And sunshine in his breast.

*The Epicurean's Garden.*

THE black-heart cherry spreads a net  
Of blood-drops on the wall ;  
The swelling apples greenly grow  
Where they will golden fall.  
The fledgling lark has got its crest,  
And proudly strains to sing ;  
The finch has left its mossy nest,  
With gold upon its wing.

The jargonel its ripened fruit  
Begins to vain display ;  
Its bullion-weights upon the bough  
Hang temptingly all day.  
The blossom's on the Summer corn,  
Tall grows the spindling rye ;  
A deeper-jewelled sunny blue  
Has blossomed in the sky.

*THE EPICUREAN'S GARDEN.*

---

Like little threads of ruby-seed  
The red-veined currants shine ;  
The coral berries, sunny pearl,  
Are hanging line by line.  
The grape its tiny scented flower  
Spreads on the greenhouse glass ;  
The flocks of daisies blanch with white  
The russet, tawny grass.

The gooseberry's rich golden globes  
Begin to ripen sweet ;  
The strawberry its scented fruit  
Spreads crimson at our feet ;  
The barley wears a silken beard,  
The rose begins to fall ;  
No longer now with double note  
The Indian cuckoos call.

The lime is raining blossom gold,  
It spreads a hill of song,  
Draining from countless village hives  
Their black and murmuring throng ;  
Geraniums' scarlet velvet bloom  
Make all the windows gay,  
And silently the thorn-tree waits  
For next year's snowy May.

The fuchsia sheds its violet drops,  
The sun has burned the bell  
Of yonder lily, where the bee  
Loved most to brood and dwell ;  
The pansy's velvet withers up,  
Its gloss by rain washed out ;  
The honeysuckle spreads its flowers  
The chimney-wall about.

Dead yellow Autumn lurks amid  
The laurel's glossy leaves ;  
A silver dew is on the web  
The felon spider weaves ;  
The jessamine its Persian bloom  
Sheds round the window-sill ;  
The evening red is burning down  
Below the village hill.

The bergamot its scented juice  
Is treasuring for me ;  
The beurré hoards its syrup gold  
Far up the spiral tree ;  
The oats their silky, feathery heads  
Toss wantonly about ;  
The weaving shadows scud and skim  
The breezes put to rout.

Above my head the walnuts grow,  
Green, marbled, round, and smooth ;  
The filbert, with the flapping leaf,  
Dear to the squirrel's tooth.  
The currants, blood-veined, in the sun,  
The raspberries on the cane,  
The leaves that silver spangles hoard  
After the last night's rain.

The shadow slants across our roof,  
Rough-scaled with mossy tiles,  
That 'fend us from the bitter rain,  
And from the sun's wroth smiles ;  
The scented rose its flower-cascades  
From every chimney flings ;  
And round the birds' nests in the eaves  
The honeysuckle clings.

The roses at the window-sill  
Their offerings present :  
We live in roses—overhead  
They're spreading like a tent.  
The white stars of the jessamine  
Are snowing round the wall ;  
At every gust those scented snows  
Upon my paper fall.

My level lawn is gilt with sun,  
With daisies sprinkled white ;  
The purple thyme, so crisp and dry,  
The robber-bees' delight.  
To guard us stands the cedar-tree,  
A dark and stately king,  
Whose eastern branches, sad and slow,  
A dirge are murmuring.

THE GAMEKEEPER.

---

A southern wall to warm the peach  
Unto a dusty red ;  
A walk of matted apple-trees,  
And many a violet bed ;  
A wilderness of emerald shade  
Lit by the coloured flowers—  
A dial, where the shadow draws  
A black line through the hours.

Weep roses, with the bleeding hearts,  
Love's anguish only grieves :  
I read the simple moral writ  
On all your fading leaves.  
The flower that closes with the sun,  
The flower that tells the rain,  
Are both my subjects, growing tall  
And fair in my domain.

It is a plot of Fairyland,  
A square of Paradise :  
I care not for the burning sand  
That grows the Indian's rice.  
To others give the realm whose dust  
Bright sparkles with the gold,  
So I but have to pasture thought  
This little wattled fold.

Deep in a garden Adam dwelt,—  
Eve made it heaven on earth ;  
No blossom drooped, till Autumn came  
With sin, and pain, and dearth.

Our JESUS in a garden tomb  
Embalmed with flowers was laid ;  
Upon the massy red-sealed stone  
Three days flower-shadows played.

The angel lilies, silver-robed,  
Are trooping here in bands ;  
To me the scented-blossom vines  
Stretch out their little hands.  
Deep in the laurel-bush the thrush  
Of love in music prates ;  
And there, in juries, round the fruit,  
The blackbirds hold debates.

We'll not forget the hawthorn-bush,  
A mountain-top of snow,  
A hill of music till sweet May  
Has ceased to bud and blow.  
Now a green net to catch the sun,  
And trap its wayward beams,  
With figured leaf so quaintly cut,—  
THIS WAS MY HOME OF DREAMS.

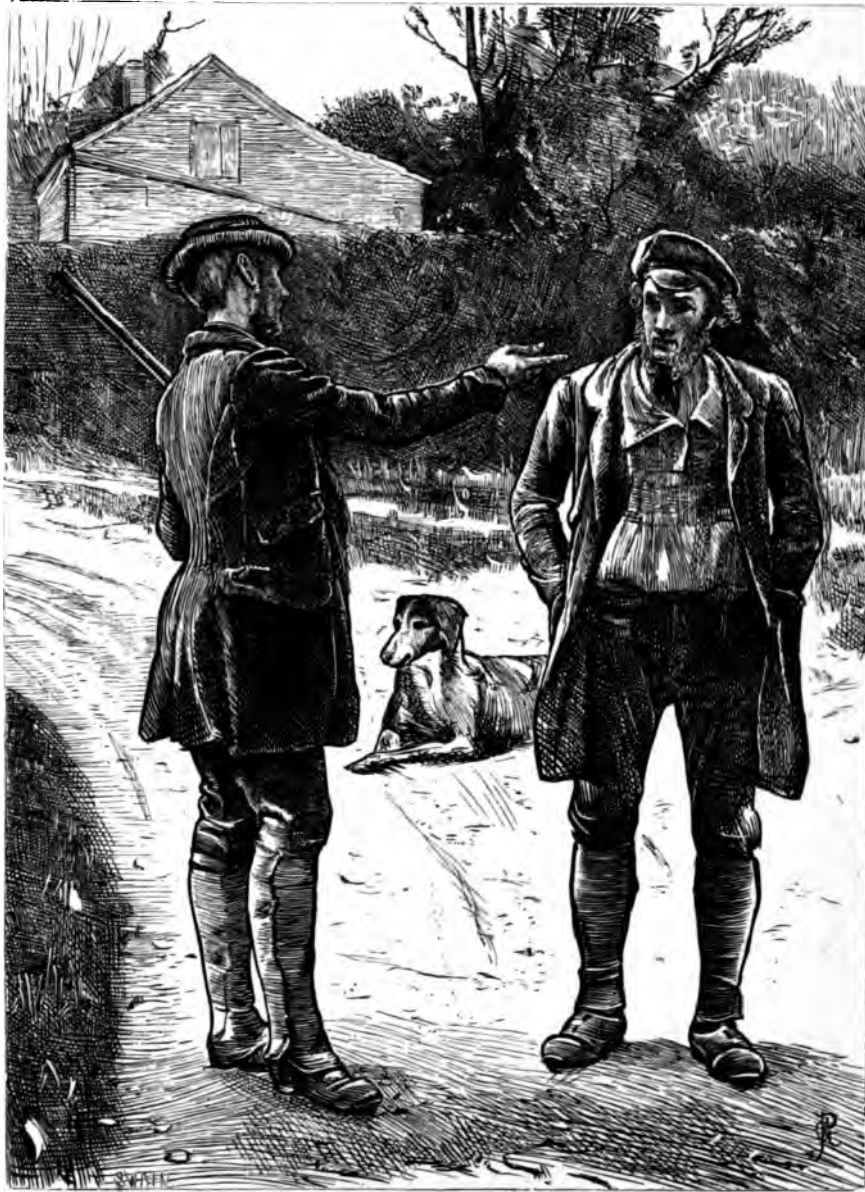
The *worst* is, that the bailiff Death  
Will some day leap my wall,  
And I must leave my melon-frame,  
Obedient to his call.  
His hard, unfeeling, hollow voice,  
I hear in every wind ;  
And dread to see the garden gate  
Shut with a jar behind.

---

The Gamekeeper.

FIRS that are the squirrels' ladders ;  
Dog-wood berries bunching red ;  
Large-leafed hazels' lissom switches ;  
Golden moss, the violets' bed—

*THE GAMEKEEPER.*



Past them all, and by the fern-tufts  
Came the keeper, twisting snares ;  
Gay were the trout-flies in his hat,  
And at his back there swung two hares.

### THE POOR MAN'S HERITAGE.

---

He leaped quick over the old notched stile,  
Singing a ditty of Dorsetshire;  
Then rested his gun on a fir-tree spoke,  
And sat down twisting the treacherous wire.—  
As he thought of the cottage hid in the wood,—  
A grim face watched him from under the fern;  
That soft low whistle ne'er boded good,  
But it did not make him listen nor turn.

\* \* \* \* \*

Where the blow-flies cluster, and crowd so thick,  
Round the greenest centre of the copse;  
Where the bindweed trails, and creeps, and hangs,  
And where grow thickest the wild hops—  
There lies, face downwards, a murdered man,  
With a rusty gun close to his hand.—  
He's torn with shot, and his fingers red  
Still clutch the leaves and the trampled sand.

---

### The Poor Man's Heritage.

THE bright blue zenith's o'er us,  
The broad world's underneath,  
God's flowers bloom all around us,  
The wild fruit's for our teeth.  
These clouds are angel pageants,  
This snow's our wonder-sight;  
For us the combinations  
Of Morn, and Eve, and Night.

For us the Ocean's splendour,  
For us Night buds with stars,  
The Moon, that great Archangel,  
The dark with glory bars.  
The sunbeams leap to gladden  
Us poor men at the plough;  
For us the dewdrop's scented  
On every blossom-bough.

For us the south wind's odours  
(The rich can buy perfume);  
Each forest has a chamber,  
And every cave a room.  
The rich hire wanton singers;  
But every covert here  
Is full of small musicians,  
Our heart and sense to cheer.

The rich hire wanton singers,  
For us the wild deer bound,  
Their every hoof strikes music  
From out the hollow ground.  
The breeze blows soft to cool us,  
And fans our heated brow,  
As tired we rest between the tilts  
Of our keen-flashing plough.



*THE PARTING OF THE SWALLOW.*

---

Content comes not with riches,  
It needs no golden dish,—  
Suffice the wooden platter,  
The loaf, the fresh-caught fish ;  
It needs no wine of Xeres,  
But gaily quaffs the brook ;  
It loves no hall or daïs,  
But the simple fireside nook.

The rivers run to meet us,  
The sea's our restless slave,  
Earth, all day long our mother,  
At night prepares our grave.  
The wild beasts are our vassals ;  
Air, fire, and light are ours  
The poorest man among us  
Is tended by the Hours.

---

*The Parting of the Swallow.*

BIRD of Summer, bird of Summer,  
Now the wheaten sheaves are piling,  
And the red October sunlight  
Still though through a mist is smiling.  
Why forsake our common shelter,  
Bird with wing so soft and sable,  
Why desert these clustering chimneys,  
Or this overhanging gable?

Bird of Summer, bird of Summer,  
The broad sky is blue and sunny ;  
Still from flowers, although they're fading,  
Hasty wild bees gather honey.  
Why, then, cease thy restless flashing  
Through the leaves hung few and golden,  
While the gnats still lead their dances,  
And the sheep are not yet folden?

Bird of Summer, bird of Summer,  
In the cobwebs dew-drops quiver,  
Bright as velvet shot with silver,  
And the broad leaves of the chestnut  
Fall off with a chilly shiver.  
The slow death-damp's dripping, dripping,  
Like big tears upon a coffin ;  
All the while the ruthless tempest  
Like a brutal sexton's scoffing.

Bird of Summer, bird of Summer,  
The cold dews freeze bright and glitter,

*THE PARTING OF THE SWALLOW.*

---

Where, round plummy wayside thistle,  
Starving sparrows crowd and twitter.  
New-dug graves the wind is filling  
With the leaves so newly fallen,  
And they blow into the cradle  
Where the child the mother's calling.

Bird of Summer, bird of Summer,  
'Mid the bare boughs of the orchard  
Hangs the apple ripe and mellow;  
By it sings the robin watching,  
As it sways so red and yellow.  
And the bird the treasure's guarding  
From the prying boy below;  
But his song points out the plunder  
To the keen eye of the foe.

Bird of Summer, bird of Summer,  
Now the worn plough's red and rusting  
Underneath the dripping thatches;  
In the barn the flail is pounding,  
Louder as men lift the latches;  
And the beech is red and mouldering,  
While the oak-leaf's brown and searing,  
Through the elm spread golden veinings,  
'Mid the emerald appearing.

Bird of Summer, bird of Summer,  
Fly away to ancient Egypt,  
Where the sun is ever burning;  
Where the sand the hunted ostrich  
In the Arab's eyes is spurning.  
Thou it was who led the exiles,  
Guiding them from Palestine,  
When Child Jesus smiled, as Mary  
Bade Him stroke those wings of thine.

Bird of Summer, bird of Summer,  
That same God that bade thee lead them  
Will be now a guide to thee,—  
As thou led them 'cross the desert,  
Will lead you across the sea.  
Till the palms that know no Autumn  
Shall burst green upon thy sight,  
And thy wing shall flash through sunbeams,  
And the river's waves of light.



### The Bird's Promise.

THE blackbird, on the great elm-tree,  
Sings (as I lie in bed) to me.  
" 'T will not be long—' t will not be long,"  
Is still the burden of his song.

### THE MILLER.

---

In chill dark mornings, as I doze,  
These promises break my repose.  
"It is so near—it is so near,"  
In cheerful cadence, greet my ear.

'Tis Spring the bird upon the tree  
So sweetly promises to me.  
"T will not be long—'t will not be long,"  
Is still the burden of his song.

I rise, and through the frosty pane  
I peep, and try to hope again.  
"Tis true, I sing,—'tis true, I sing."—  
"Bird, I have pined too long for Spring."

---

### The Miller.

HO! for the stone that crushes ;  
Hey! for the whirling sail ;  
When the old mill shakes in every plank  
Like a vessel in the gale.  
Hey! for the blast that driveth  
The ponderous mill-wheel round,  
When of the snow-storm showering  
We hear the mellow sound.  
  
Hey! for the winds of Winter,  
When it never bloweth ill ;  
For in idle breeze of Summer  
The miller sitteth still.  
In the dull, grey night,—the long, long night,  
When the frost is on the earth,  
A weary man's the miller  
As he sitteth by his hearth.  
  
Hey! for the roaring hurricane  
That tears the forest tree :  
Ah! the savage din of tempest  
Is the miller's melody.

All night in wild December,  
The whole cold night along,  
O'er the buzz within and the roar without  
Is heard the miller's song.  
  
When the bare bleak moor is lying  
All white beneath the moon,  
The north wind roars a thunder bass  
To the lonely miller's tune.  
When the mill-sails wild are tossing,  
Like a spirit's arms on high,  
Like the arms of one beseeching  
Help from the murky sky—  
Help from the savage fury  
Of the wind that flies above—  
The wind that the blanched miller  
Can never choose but love.  
Hey! for the stout nor'-wester  
That shatters the cottage pane :  
The wind is the miller's vassal  
That grinds his golden grain.

### THE HARVEST DANCE.

---

It may rush o'er distant mountains,  
It may roar across the hill ;  
It may hurry along the blasted moor,  
But first it drives the mill.  
Summer's a weary season,  
And dull the sunny earth ;  
The grey cold eve of Winter  
Is the time for the miller's mirth.

The miller is no coward,  
Though he's pale as a frightened maid ;  
His cheek's as red as the crimson rose  
In a snowy robe arrayed.  
Oh ! all night long when the piping wind  
Is whistling loud without,  
'Tween the bars of the old mill window  
At the stars he looketh out.

---

### The Harvest Dance.

I HEAR the pipe, now the corn is ripe,  
Call all the reapers hither ;  
The corn-flower blue, so bright with dew,  
Shall soon grow pale and wither.  
'Mid the golden corn I hear the horn  
Answer the distant song,  
And the sickle keen by its flash is seen,  
In the hands of the reaper strong.

Glad sounds the pipe when the corn is ripe,  
Merry among the sheaves,  
And the blossom dead 'neath the reapers' tread  
Fades fast, as do the leaves.  
Our merry train, the ponderous wain  
Pile up with bronzed gold,  
For the teeming earth to the reapers' mirth  
Yieldeth a thousandfold.

At the sound of the pipe when the corn is ripe  
The crimson poppy fades,  
And yellow grain is level lain  
Beneath the sickle-blades.  
The timid hare beholds the glare,  
And flees at the boding sound,  
White the barn's wide doors, by the toiling boors,  
Are opened with a bound.

*THE CUCKOO.—THE HIDDEN ROSES.*

---

Now sound the pipe, for the corn so ripe  
Is garnered sure and fast,  
Of the grain we've store till the Winter's o'er,  
And the snow and rain have passed.  
O bright-eyed Joy each shouting boy  
Doth ne'er so much entrance,  
As when reapers all in order fall,  
And 'gin the harvest dance.

---

**The Cuckoo.**

**W**HEN a warm and scented steam  
Rises from the flowering earth ;  
When the green leaves are all still,  
And the song-birds cease their mirth ;  
In the silence before rain  
Comes the cuckoo back again.

When the Spring is all but gone—  
Tearful April, laughing May—  
When a hush comes on the woods,  
And the sunbeams cease to play ;  
In the silence before rain  
Sounds the cuckoo's voice again.

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**The Hidden Roses.**

**E'**EN now, within the frozen stems,  
June's roses lie concealed,  
Till throstles sing, and larks soar up,  
And Summer be revealed.  
E'en now, in their enchanted sleep  
Beneath the frozen clod,  
The little baby-blossoms wait  
The summons of their God.

The snow-time and the Winter storm  
Will vanish like a cloud ;

Soon Spring will cast her swallows forth,  
And May-trees blossom proud.  
Rainbows will arch the sunny air,  
Lambs leap in every fold, [through  
And through the dark warm earth pierce  
The crocus flushed with gold.

Winter, the discrown'd king, will cast  
The white mask from his face ;  
As Spring, his rosy child, with smiles  
Beholds the swallows chase.

*THE HIDDEN ROSES.*



From Night's black grave, like Lazarus,  
The striving day comes forth ;  
The Winter storm sows seeds of joy  
East, west, and south and north.

"CONSULE PLANCO."

Spring comes with sound of whispering leaves,  
And songs of waking birds :  
The joy of May-time is too great  
To shape itself in words.  
Soon buds will widen into flowers,  
And Summer be revealed ;  
E'en now, within the frozen stems,  
June's roses lie concealed.

"Consule Planco."

CONSULE PLANCO : I was young,  
Struggling hard with the Latin tongue,  
And conjugating "*Amo*"—  
Loving the cane (of sugar), true !  
Also dreading the lithe bamboo,  
But neither deaf nor lame—"oh !"

Consule Planco : year fifteen,  
Then May's green leaves were really green,  
June suns were vastly brighter ;  
Ay ! and the peaches were juicier far,  
And large as the modern moon each star,  
And Summer days were lighter.

Consule Planco : friends were true,  
Never ignoring their I O U  
When dawned the gloomy pay-day.  
Then hand and heart went still together,  
Came sunshine or came stormy weather ;  
But now 't is different,—heyday !

Consule Planco : such cravats,  
Broad-brimmed, Brummelly, bell-shaped hats,  
Huge watch-seals, hung in tassels—  
And great respect for Regent George,  
At Lord Mayor's feast or civic gorge,  
As fitted loyal vassals,

No telegraphs with restless wires,  
Ten per cent. less at least of fires,  
Those railways all unknown.  
Coaches kept all your friends aloof,  
When England, free from Bony's hoof,  
Had propped the Bourbon's throne.

Consule Planco : forty years  
Since first I stood among my peers,  
All armed with wig and gown,  
And shuddered at the cat-like eyes  
Of Baron Garrow, whose surprise  
Soon darkened to a frown.

Consule Planco : years ago  
My beardless cheeks were all aglow,  
Asking *a simple question*.  
Many questions I have asked since then,  
And many answers from proud men  
Have caused me indigestion.

Consule Planco : youth is gone,  
But here I am, still lingering on,  
Though Garrow's called away ;  
And she who said that nectared "Yes"  
Is lost to me beyond redress,  
Till Resurrection Day.



## Shooting for the Silber Cup.

RED in the sun the danger flag  
Rises above the green turf bank ;  
High up, the fir-trees watchful stand,  
Ranged in their silent, level rank ;  
And now, like anvils at each blow,  
Ting ! tang ! the iron targets go.

We moor our carts up in the gorse  
We tap the stone jars, large and cool ;  
Then sling our rifles, and run fast,  
Like boys just broken out from school ;  
For now, in yonder sunshine-glow,  
Ting ! tang ! the merry bullets go.

We pinch the cartridge-paper off ;  
Quick slides the powder, coarse of grain ;  
Down drives the little cone of lead ;  
On goes a shining cap again—  
And now, though ruffling winds may blow,  
Rap ! rap ! the flying bullets go.

White, and no larger than a card,  
An "Ace of Clubs," stands out the mark ;  
Rings out the ramrod's rapid steel ;  
Streams out each fiery gushing spark—  
Like beaten anvils, at each blow,  
Ting ! tang ! the echoing targets go.

Yet blackbirds whistle from the hill,  
Where wild doves brood upon their nests ;  
They know the bullet's not for them,  
But only for our foemen's breasts.  
Look ! down the valley in the glow,  
The thistle-seeds in clusters blow.

Fate, send me centres, closer still,  
And drive my bullet through the black ;  
Oh, what will Lucy say, if he  
She loves without the cup go back ?  
"A miss !" "Hurrah ! a bull's-eye ?" "No ;"  
So echoes answer from below.

We've little time, for twilight grey  
Comes stealing over miles of down ;  
Through jets of fire, the bullets skim  
Over the grass so scorched and brown,  
And glimmering through the after-glow,  
The whitened targets ghastly show.

Fly, bullet, swiftly, staunch and straight,  
To the full centre of the black ;  
Thou, wind, breathe softly from the west,  
And scatter every rising rack ;  
And, targets, at my last good blow,  
With clear full cadence echoing go.

Over the notch so sharply cut  
I glance an eager, watchful eye ;  
I pull with slow and patient care ;  
Hurrah ! I hear the marker's cry.  
Now let the brown beer frothing flow ;  
The silver cup is mine, you know !

I'll drive home with it in my hand,  
Display it at the turnpike-gate,  
And wave it to my passing friends ;  
And when I reach home, tired and late,  
And see my Lucy's candle shine,  
I'll shout : "The silver cup is mine !"





### The Miller's Meadow.

THE swan loves the brook in the Ten-acre Meadow,  
Sailing so lordly, so wanton and lordly,  
Where the green dragon-fly, jewelled so gaily,  
Flits round the mill in the Ten-acre Meadow.

The swallows race by in the Ten-acre Meadow,  
Their shadows pursuing, in circles renewing,  
Flying as swift as though hawks were pursuing,  
Round the broad reach of the Ten-acre Meadow.

The pike loves the dam in the Ten-acre Meadow,  
Chasing with keen eye, like Herod of Jewry,  
The innocent dace who are flying his fury,  
Troubling the dam in the Ten-acre Meadow.

*TWO COUNTRY HOUSES.*

---

*I love the walk in the Ten-acre Meadow,  
So golden with Spring-flowers, with Spring-flowers so golden,  
For there I meet Katy, the miller's own darling,  
And there in her fond arms I often am folden.*

---

**Two Country Houses.**

I.

LADYWELL.

LADYWELL is fair and stately,  
Proud it stands, and yet sedately,—  
With its turrets glowing red  
In the sunshine overhead ;  
With its windows golden bright  
In the great sun's gentle light ;  
With its meadows, and a stream  
Flowing with a silvery gleam :  
Oh, merry as a marriage-bell  
Passed my days at Ladywell.

Ladywell is sweet and pleasant :  
There the rich-plumed Indian pheasant  
Breaks in flashes from the covert,  
Startling the moody lover ;  
There the rabbits play and feed  
In the mushroom-dotted mead ;  
Children, bound with flowery chains,  
Course along the shady lanes :  
Oh, merry as a marriage-bell  
Went my days at Ladywell.

In the fir-trees, dark and tall,  
By the warren's mossy wall,  
Builds the mother-dove her nest  
(Bird I love by far the best),  
With a brooding lullaby

Greeting me as I pass by,—  
Bringing once more to my eyes  
Dreams and pleasant memories :  
Oh, merry as a marriage-bell  
Passed my days at Ladywell.

There the farmer—happy fellow !—  
Sees his thick wheat turning yellow ;  
There the black bees restless graze  
On the daisies' snowy rays,  
On the wild rose hung with dew,  
On the cornflower's radiant blue,  
On the harebells thin and frail,  
On the black-eyed poppies' veil :  
Oh, merry as a marriage-bell  
Went my days at Ladywell.

There the hedges' flowery tangle  
Echo with the young birds' jangle ;  
And the wild thrush, singing, vies,  
While the cuckoo silent flies ;  
And the lark, in wingéd song,  
Tracks the fleece-cloud, glad and strong ;  
And the young birds, in a row,  
Greet him from the wood below :  
Oh, merry as a marriage-bell  
Passed my days at Ladywell.

*THE PASSING CLOUD.*

II.

MERRY MOUNT.

I 'M the lord of Merry Mount.  
Merry Mount is fair and stable,  
With its weathercocks ashine  
Twinkling in a golden line,  
With its terrace and its fount,  
With its oriel and its gable :  
Proud am I of Merry Mount !

Look at princely Merry Mount !  
See the red deer leap and trample,  
Hear the pheasants how they call,  
Round the old park's girdling wall !  
Ought I not to be a Count,  
With this broad domain so ample,  
Or the Duke of Merry Mount ?

Nowhere else but Merry Mount  
Do the trout leap up in flashes,  
Or such blackbirds' carols meet  
In one silver pulse and beat ;  
In no blue air such a fount  
Bursts up through the sapling ashes :  
Proud am I of Merry Mount !

*The Passing Cloud.*

O CLOUD, so beautiful and fleet,  
Passing where fierce suns burn and beat,  
O'er heights untrod by human feet !

Chameleon cloud, of iris hue,  
—As changeful as a drop of dew,  
How many shapes in moments few !—

A car, a globe, a golden gloom,  
How many forms thou dost assume !  
A mountain, pyramid, or tomb.

So many shapes beneath the sun,  
So many dyes that fusing run,  
And beauty still in every one.

Tinged with the hue the rainbows cast  
On snow-peaks, where their image fast  
Fades down before the scowling blast.

Such golden light the young moon threw  
Upon the still drops of the dew,  
What time the night-wind fresher blew.

Such lustre water-lilies throw  
Upon the brook that lies below,  
Lipping their blossoms with its flow.

'T would make a brain-sick painter pine  
To win a hue to match with thine,  
To make his martyr's mantle shine.

In such a cloud the angels seek  
The hermit on the granite peak,  
So pale, so humble, and so meek.

Such cloud when JESUS, long ere day,  
Had sought the mountain-top to pray,  
A halo round Him seemed to play.

*NAPOLEON BALLADS.*

The bayonets shook, the stormy shout  
Burst like a thunder-clap,  
How lightning-quick the fiery beat  
Of the fierce drummer's tap!—

A dash of hoofs—the carriage broke  
Impetuous through the crowd,  
And after it the rolling dust  
Rose in a blinding cloud.

IV.

THE SCHOOLBOY KING.

*A SCENE AT BRIENNE.*

LE PÈRE PETRAULT shut Virgil up  
Just as the clock struck ten :  
“This little Bonaparte,” he said,  
“Is one of Plutarch's men.  
To see him with his massive head,  
Gripped mouth, and swelling brow,  
Wrestle with Euclid—there he sat  
Not half an hour from now.”

The good old pedagogue his book  
Put slowly in its place :  
“That Corsican,” he said, “has eyes  
Like burning-glasses ; race  
Italian, as his mother said ;  
Barred up from friend and foe,  
He toils all night, inflexible,  
Forging it blow by blow.

“I know his trick of thought, the way  
He covers up his mouth :  
One hand like this, the other clenched—  
Those eyes of the hot South.  
The little Cæsar, how he strides,  
Sleep-walking in the sun,  
Only awaking at the roar  
Of the meridian gun.

“I watched him underneath my book  
That day he sprung the mine,  
For when the earth-wall rocked and reeled,  
His eyes were all a-shine ;  
And when it slowly toppled down,  
He leaped up on the heap  
With fiery haste—just as a wolf  
Would spring upon a sheep.

“Pichegru, Napoleon's monitor,  
Tells me he's dull and calm,  
Tenacious, firm, submissive—yes,  
Our chain is on his arm.  
Volcanic natures, such as his,  
I dread ;—may God direct  
This boy to good—the evil quell—  
His better will direct.

“Here is his Euclid book—the ink  
Still wet upon the rings ;  
These are the talismans some day  
He'll use to fetter kings.  
To train a genius like this lad  
I've prayed for years—for years ;  
But now I know not whether hopes  
Are not half choked by fears.

“Last Monday, when they built that fort  
With bastions of snow,  
The ditch, and spur, and ravelin,  
And terraced row on row,  
'T was Bonaparte who cut the trench,  
Who shaped the line of sap,—  
A year or two, and he will be  
First in war's bloody gap.

“I see him now upon the hill,  
His hands behind his back,  
Waving the tricolor that led  
The vanguard of attack ;  
And there, upon the trampled earth,  
The ruins of the fort,  
This Bonaparte, the schoolboy king,  
Held his victorious court.

NAPOLEON BALLADS.

"To see him give the shouting crowd  
His little hand to kiss,  
You'd think him never meant by God  
For any lot but this.  
And then with loud exulting cheers,  
Upon their shoulders borne,  
He rode with buried Cæsar's pride,  
And Alexander's scorn.  
"Ah! I remember, too, the day  
The fire-balloon went up;  
It burnt away into a star  
Ere I went off to sup;

But he stood weeping there alone  
Until the dark night came,  
To think he had not wings to fly  
And catch the passing flame.

"Oh! he is meant for mighty things,  
This leader of my class;—  
But there's the bell that rings for me,  
So let the matter pass.  
You see that third-floor window lit,  
The blind drawn half-way down;  
That's Bonaparte's—he's at it now—  
It makes the dunces frown."

V.

MADAME MÈRE.

[Napoleon's undeviating affection for his mother was one of the finest features of his private character.—  
DESMOULINS.]

THE Luxembourg was full of kings,  
As round rich Dives' gate  
The lepers came; the Emperor,  
Like Charlemagne in state,  
Sat high o'er all. The uniforms  
Were many-coloured there,  
But humble as a Quakeress  
Was simple Madame Mère.

There was the courtly Talleyrand,  
Hoof-legged—a devil lame;  
Old Fouché, bulldog-faced and rough,  
Bowed worshipping the flame  
Of this great fiery central sun.  
From ugly and from fair  
He turned his head to watch the face  
Of simple Madame Mère.

Le Braves des Braves stood there erect,  
Taming his lion heart,  
And Soult, his manly, eager eyes  
Fixed on this Bonaparte.  
The old noblesse, half shy, afraid,  
Were crawling humbly there,  
In whispering crowds around the chair  
Of simple Madame Mère.

There was Murat, a circus king,  
All cherry cloth and lace,  
And Augereau, the Jacobin,  
A butcher's son by race,  
With half a dozen subject-kings,  
The meanest vassals there:  
He turned from all to kiss the hand  
Of smiling Madame Mère.

VI.

THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW.

AS IT APPEARED TO A POLISH ABBÉ, AT WARSAW, DECEMBER 16th, 1812.

THE yellow snow-fog curdled thick,  
Dark, brooding, dull, and brown,  
About the ramparts, hiding all  
The steeples of the town;

The icicles, as thick as beams,  
Hung down from every roof,  
When all at once we heard a sound  
As of a muffled hoof.

*NAPOLÉON BALLADS.*

'T was nothing but a soldier's horse,  
All riderless and torn  
With bullets : scarce his bleeding legs  
Could reach the gate. A morn  
Of horror broke upon us then ;  
We listened, but no drum—  
Only a sullen, distant roar,  
Telling us that they come.

Next, slowly staggering through the fog,  
A grenadier reeled past,  
A bloody turban round his head,  
His pallid face aghast.  
Behind him, with an arm bound up  
With half a Russian flag,  
Came one—then three—the last one sopped  
His breast with crimson rag.

Quick all at once a sullen bell  
Upon the gateway tower  
Broke out, to warn our citizens  
Napoleon's savage power  
Had gone to wreck, and these the waifs  
Were making fast to land.  
It bade us look to see the hulk  
Sucked hellward by the sand.

All day the frozen, bleeding men  
Came pouring through the place ;  
Drums broken, colours torn to shreds,  
Foul wounds on every face.  
Black powder-waggons, scorched and split,  
Broad wheels caked thick with snow,  
Red bayonets bent, and swords that still  
Were reeking from the blow.

A drunken rabble, pale and wan,  
With cursing faces turned  
To where, still threatening in the rear,  
The port-fires lurid burned.  
The ground was strewn with epaulettes,  
Letters, and cards, and songs ;  
The barrels, leaking drops of gold,  
Were trampled by the throngs.

A brutal, selfish, goring mob,  
Yet here and there a trace  
Of the divine shone out, and lit  
A gashed and suffering face.  
Here came a youth, who on his back  
His dying father bore ;  
With bandaged feet the brave youth limped,  
Slow, shuddering, dripping gore.

And even 'mid the trampling crowd,  
Maimed, crippled by the frost,  
I found that every spark of good  
Was not extinct and lost.  
Deep in the ranks of savage men  
I saw two grenadiers  
Leading their corporal, his breast  
Stabbed by the Cossack spears.

He saved that boy, whose tearful eyes  
Were fixed upon the three—  
Although too weak to beat his drum  
Still for his company.  
Half-stripped, or wrapped in furs and gowns,  
The broken ranks went on :  
They ran if any one called out  
"The Cossacks of the Don !"

The whispered rumour, like a fire,  
Spreads fast from street to street ;  
With boding look and shaking head  
The staring gossips meet :  
"Ten thousand horses every night  
Were smitten by the frost ;  
Full thirty thousand rank and file  
In Beresina lost.

"The Cossacks fill their caps with gold  
The Frenchmen fling away.  
Napoleon was shot the first,  
And only lived a day—  
They say that Caulaincourt is lost—  
The guns are left behind :  
God's curse has fallen on these thieves—  
He sent the snow and wind."

NAPOLEON BALLADS.

Tired of the clatter and the noise,  
I sought an inner room,  
Where twenty wax lights, starry clear,  
Drove off the fog and gloom.  
I took my wanton Ovid down,  
And soon forgot the scene,  
As through my dreams I saw arise  
The rosy-bosomed queen.

My wine stood mantling in the glass  
(The goblet of Voltaire),  
I sipped and dozed, and dozed and sipped,  
Slow rocking in my chair,  
When open flew the bursting door,  
And Caulaincourt stalked in—  
Tall, gaunt, and wrapped in frozen furs,  
Hard frozen to his skin.

\* \* \* \*

The wretched hag of the low inn  
Puffed at the sullen fire  
Of spitting wood, that hissed and smoked :  
There stood the Jove whose ire  
But lately set the world aflame,  
Wrapped in a green pelisse,  
Fur-lined, and stiff with half-burnt lace,  
Trying to seem at ease.

“Bah ! Du sublime au ridicule  
Il n’y a qu’un pas,”  
He said. “The rascals think they’ve made  
A comet of my star.  
The army broken—dangers ?—pish !—  
I did not bring the frost.  
Levy ten thousand Poles, Duroc—  
Who tells me we have lost ?

“I beat them everywhere, Murat—  
It is a costly game ;  
But nothing venture, nothing win—  
I’m sorry now we came.  
That burning Moscow was a deed  
Worthy of ancient Rome—  
Mind that I gild the Invalides  
To match the Kremlin dome.

“Well ? well as Beelzebub himself !”  
He leaped into the sleigh  
Sent for to bear this Cæsar off  
Upon his ruthless way.  
A flash of fire !—the courtyard stones  
Snapped out—the landlord cheered—  
In a hell-gulf of pitchy dark  
The carriage disappeared.

VII.

THE VISIT TO THE MILITARY HOSPITAL,

AFTER BAUTZEN, 1813.

“THIS is the fate of those who war,”  
Napoleon said to me ;  
“High at the morn, but low at night.  
Take down that map and see  
How many leagues we won to-day.  
Ten losses. I retire.  
*One victory.* Berlin, Breslau,  
Shall crumble at my fire.”

We stood outside the Thirteenth Ward,  
He spoke as hushed and low  
As if each word on some sick man  
Would fall a smiting blow ;

He turned the handle very soft  
As to one sleeping, then  
We stood beside the line of beds,  
Among the wounded men.

He laid his hand with woman’s care  
Upon a soldier’s brow ;  
The dying face turned slowly up.  
“Do you not know me now ?  
Your Emperor ?” The dying lips  
Struggled for life, the heart  
Beat once, the sick man faltered out,  
“COMRADES, ’T IS BONAPARTE !”



CHRISTMAS IN THE WORKHOUSE.

Then with a groan lay down again,  
To pray for him and die.  
The tears sprang up into my eyes  
When, faint and weak, the cry  
Ran through the ward of Austerlitz,  
"The Emperor is come!"  
And one poor boy with bandaged hand  
Caught at his broken drum.

The dying on their pillows rose,  
To swell the hoarse, low cheer  
That rolled along—'t was pitiful,  
Yet saddening to hear.  
"My children," cried the Emperor,  
"My old Imperial Guards,  
My 'Salamanders,' 'Never-turns,'  
My 'Lions,' my 'Die-hards,'

"I love you as I love my life;  
We are the self-same stock.  
France cares for you—'t was you who bled  
To build her on the rock;

Your wives and orphans she will take  
To her capacious heart.  
Dare she forget them while HE reigns,  
Your little Bonaparte?

"My children——" But the rare-seen tears  
Rose up and filled his throat,  
As every bugler took his horn  
And blew the battle note;  
And then the wounded drummer-boy,  
Two dead men's beds betwixt,  
Crawled to the floor and slung his drum,  
And plied the little sticks.

A one-armed man took off a flag  
He'd bound around his waist,  
To sop and stanch the brave heart's blood  
That from his gashes raced.  
He waved it round his feeble head,  
His large eyes all a-fire,  
Then let it drop, and laid him down,  
The brave man—to expire.

Christmas in the **W**orkhouse.

THE prickly holly, spotted with red,  
Bristled at every pane,  
There were waggons shaking with holly  
Brushing down many a lane;  
Laughing children raced and ran,  
Red as the Winter berry;  
I listened outside the workhouse gate,  
*And even "the paupers" were merry.*

Pleasant to see the frosted flowers  
On every window-pane;  
Pleasant to hear the red-faced lads  
Run shouting down the lane;

*CHRISTMAS IN THE WORKHOUSE.*

But the sound that cheered me Christmas through,  
Over my dry old sherry,  
Was hearing there, at the workhouse gate,  
That even "the paupers" were merry.



Christmas was gay in the old squire's hall,  
Gay at the village inn,  
Cheery and loud by the farmer's fire,  
Happy the manse within ;

*LAND IN SIGHT! HOME AT LAST!*

---

But the surest signs of the general joy,  
And that all the world was happy—very,  
Were the sounds that proved at the workhouse door  
That even “the paupers” were merry.

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*Land in Sight! Home at Last!*

I.

THE laughing sea rolls blue and free,  
And on every face there is joy and glee;  
For the west wind harps, in the rigging, soft,  
And the broad white canvas, that's spread aloft,  
Strains fuller now to the homeward wind;  
And even the sea-bird's left behind,  
As the ship cleaves faster the crimson wave,  
In the sunset red as a warrior's grave.

II.

“Land in sight!” and “Home at last!”  
That is the cry that spreads so fast;  
And they fancy already they hear the bells  
Ringing from distant Cornish dells.  
Soon, soon the granite cliffs will rise  
To cheer the longing and straining eyes;  
Once past yon burning sunset line,  
They'll see the English headlands shine.

III.

The sea grows greener every hour,  
The deep keel ploughs with a keener power;  
The dusk is spreading its shroud of gloom,  
And night, like the lid of a pond'rous tomb,  
Falls slow; but the laugh and the song rise up  
As the bubbles spring in a champagne-cup;  
For there in the east the magnet star  
Of a lighthouse is welcoming them from far.

*LAND IN SIGHT! HOME AT LAST!*

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IV.

Sleep, brave men, sleep, for home is near;  
Sleep, mothers, sleep, without dream of fear;  
Sleep, children, sleep, for the sea's at rest,  
Rocking you all to its fost'ring breast:  
The ship so staunch and true and strong,  
With the tyrant sea has battled long.  
In an hour the loud cry, "Shell and sand!"  
Will tell the advent of the land.

V.

Night spreads its canopy of stars  
High o'er the good ship's swaying spars—  
Halcyon night, with its balm to all;  
Soft, sweet night with its drowsy pall.  
Already the scent of the new-mown hay  
Breathes from the meadow-land far away;  
And Hope brings dreams of happier time,  
Of changeless joy, and a sunnier clime.

VI.

The land's in sight—that glimpse of the moon  
Disclosed the nearest headland; soon  
The church-tower on the cliff will show—  
When yon dark cloud away shall blow.  
Plough faster, ship; they pine for rest;  
Hast thou a heart within thy breast?  
Swifter, then, swifter thy homeward flight,  
To that long low line of glimmering white.

VII.

What scream was that?—that anguish starts  
From bleeding and from breaking hearts.  
A blue smoke oozes from the hold,  
Brave cheeks grow pale, and hearts grow cold;  
See, broad flames from the port-holes leap,  
Keen flames along the cordage creep—  
Soon the tall masts are lapped in fire,  
Fanned by the winds the flames mount higher.



### Under the Cliffs.

THE sails, now white as a swan's breast,  
Turned in a moment golden,  
The red-brown canvas fluttering out,  
Was presently all folded.

### *THE USURPER AND HIS FATE.*

---

The tide came rolling to our feet  
With spreading frills of snow,  
As on the sand so brown and soft  
We sat, amid the glow.

The breakers rolled in ten abreast,  
Charging in stormy anger ;  
But one soft voice close to my ear  
O'erpowered their raging clangour.  
The boats might pass, the boats might tack,  
Coquetting with the land ;  
I heeded but that one soft voice,  
And the clasp of that wee hand.

True ! all the hour-glass sands that Time  
Had spilt, lay there around us  
Yet still forgetful of day's flight  
The mystic twilight found us.  
As the large moon a smouldering globe  
Of orange fire rose slow,  
And home we wandered to the town,  
Love's ebb had turned to flow.

---

### **The Usurper and his Fate.**

THE wasp was feeding deep in the plum,  
In a golden cave, like an angry king,  
Shaking his head and trying his sting,  
With a fretful feverish hum.  
He ruffled his thin, dark, narrow-veined wing  
With a restless petulant hum.  
Like an Indian sultan, in pomp and leisure,  
He swung in his hammock, taking his pleasure,  
In his gay sedan with the purple cloth.  
Proud he was, and a scornful wrath  
Made him restless, fretfully hum.

*THE USURPER AND HIS FATE.*

---

High near the top of the sunny wall,  
By the coping-brick, green-padded with moss,  
He swung like a monarch, and feared no fall ;  
For the sky was blue, and a bloom of dew  
Was over his throne, the plum.  
O LORD! if any one dared to call  
At his hermit's cell for a bit or a sup  
(A pampered anchorite, proud of the cup,  
And the flesh, and the fruit, was he),  
He drove the beggar out scornfully.  
If a long red ant came prying in,  
Or an earwig horned, with the red-black skin,  
He fumed and fretted, and out with his sting  
As a bully whips his sword.  
So, neither by courtesy, guile, nor fraud,  
Could a stranger venture in.

The leaves were sunny, the air was blue,  
And a mealy crystalline film of dew  
Bloomed on the gold-fleshed plum :  
Inside, the tyrant's warning hum  
Keep the hornet and ant away.  
Up went my ladder, and through the leaves  
My searching hand passed up and down ;  
Plump the gold drop from the spray  
Fell down. And the king has lost his crown ;  
Realm and subjects are gone to-day.  
And thus I learned, on the top of a wall,  
That sooner or later Pride will fall.





### Sea-View.

I.

DAY.

THE ships seem hanging in the air,  
Through the haze and through the mist,  
And the sea and the horizon  
Are cloudy amethyst,  
Till the keen rays pierce and sever  
The veil before the sun,  
Then the ripples dance, and sparkles  
Break forth from every one.



*SEA-VIEW.*

---

All the crescents and the churches  
Long looming through the grey,  
Appear piled up in brightness  
Of the expanding day ;  
And the pier, with arms extended,  
Seems welcoming the ships,  
And the red buoy to the southward,  
On the foam-crest shines and dips,

As the little tawny vessels,  
Umber, and yellow, and black,  
Come skimming round the foreland  
Upon the lugger's track,  
Scattered like sheep a-feeding,  
Over the glistening tide,  
And the galley's oars like pinions  
Of an albatross spread wide.

II.

NIGHT.

All day the sunbeams, shadow chased,  
Along the white cliff fleet,  
Till the red light's fading westward  
And the clover's dewy sweet ;  
Till the surf's white fire rolls beating  
Against the jetty wall,  
And you hear the ship-bells sharply  
To the absent sailors call.

And when the stars are sparkling,  
The harbour's emerald flame  
Shines to the ships returning  
To the port from whence they came ;  
And the church clock mourns so gravely  
The passing of the hour,  
And the moon in the blue sky ruling,  
Shines with a fuller power.



## Napoleon Ballads.

### I.

#### THE NIGHT REVIEW BEFORE AUSTERLITZ.

DECEMBER dawn—through frosty fogs  
The sun strove hard to shine,  
A rolling of the muster drums  
Was heard along the line ;  
In simple grey the Corporal  
Rode with his head bent down,  
More like a *savan* than the man  
Who won an Emperor's crown.

He looked at Soult, and raised his hand,  
And stood godlike upright,  
Then all at once a silence fell  
As deep and hushed as night.  
Ten thousand faces turned at once—  
Like flowers unto the sun—  
Each gunner, with his lighted match,  
Stood silent by his gun.

"One year to-day, my sons, you placed  
The crown upon my head."  
(We saw his coal-black eye was fired,  
His yellow cheek grew red.)  
"The Tartars yonder want to steal  
That iron crown you gave,  
And will you let them?" *Tête de Dieu* !  
The shout the soldiers gave !

Six hundred cannon bellowed "No !"  
The eagles waved—and then  
There came the earthquake clamouring  
Of a hundred thousand men.  
In waves of sound the grenadiers  
Cried "*Vive l'Empereur* !" at once,  
And fires broke out along the line,  
Like Lapland's midnight suns.

"Soldiers, a thunderbolt must fall  
Upon the Tartar's head,  
Your Emperor will be this day  
Victorious or dead.  
My children, where the eagle flies  
Is (who dare doubt it?) France ;  
To-day we'll light the bivouac fire  
With Russia's broken lance."

A grizzled giant, old Daru,  
Looked round him with a frown—  
He wore upon his broad bull chest  
The order of the "Crown."  
"To-morrow, sire, those Russian flags  
In sheaves we hope to bring,  
And lay them at our Emperor's feet,  
A BOUQUET FOR A KING."

### II.

#### THE BELLS OF FONTAINEBLEAU.

NAPOLEON in the grey surtout  
That kings had learned to dread,  
With close-clenched hands behind his back  
And heavy bended head,  
Climbed slowly (lost in battle plans)  
A hill near Fontainebleau,  
*One, three, two, four*, the village chimes  
Came to him from below.

The marshals, glittering with gold,  
Paced laughingly along,  
Nor hushed the scandal and the jest,  
Or scrap of opera song ;  
The Emperor stood silent there,  
A monarch turned to stone, [stand  
Nor smiled, nor moved—where great men  
The spot becomes a throne.

# NAPOLÉON BALLADS.

Below, the reapers, singing, toiled  
 With sickles (not with swords),  
 Or down in clusters round the sheaves  
 Lay revelling like lords ;  
 The soldiers pointed to the slopes  
 That bound the golden plain,  
 And almost wished that France were lost,  
 To win it o'er again.

The grey man stood, one foot outstretched,  
 As if upon a foe,  
 He cared not for the happy sight,  
 The plenty spread below,  
 Although the bells shook music down  
 From yonder village tower—  
 And hark ! the royal voice of Time  
 Exulting in his power.

At last he spoke, and slowly turned  
 (A moisture in his eyes),—  
 Massena gave a shrug that showed  
 A cynical surprise :  
 " Long years ago, at Malmaison,  
 When all unknown of men,  
 I heard just such a laughing peal,  
 And I *was happy then*."

He turned upon his heel, and then  
 Sat down upon the hill,  
 Tracing upon the level sand  
 With sword-sheath (oh, that will !)  
 The star redoubt, the diamond fort,  
 The battle lines again :—  
 A month from that he won the day  
 Upon Marengo's plain.

## III.

### THE PARTING WITH THE EAGLES, 1814.

(1824—THE SOLDIER'S WIFE TO HER BOY, THE DRUMMER.)

AN April morning ! Fontainebleau  
 Stands up and braves the sun ;  
 The dew still glitters on the turf  
 Where rabbits race and run ;  
 No hunting clamour breaks the hush,  
 No hound, or echoing hoof,  
 But sprinkling gold falls on the moat  
 And slants athwart the roof.

A *lonely day*, and Fontainebleau  
 Broods o'er its memories—  
 So old, and yet the April bloom  
 Is white upon the trees.  
 Ten Easters since ! a different scene  
 Was lit by yonder sun,  
 When through those rosy almond boughs  
 Roared the meridian gun !

That palace with its thousand eyes  
 Indeed might look aghast,  
 As the last scene that closed the play  
 Before its windows passed.

" What do they call that marble horse,  
 Just like ours in Sedan—  
 A horse for Cæsar—lion-maned ?"—  
 " That is the *Cheval Blanc*."

This is the horse-shoe staircase where  
 The Emperor came down,  
 No bloody sceptre in his hand,  
 Nor lightning-woven crown,  
 But like a simple soldier clad,  
 In his plain grey surtout,  
 And underneath the epaulettes  
 The red that faced the blue.

That noble tree that sheltered us  
 With its extended branch,  
 Was smit by steel and split by fire—  
*Revanche, mon Dieu, revanche !*  
 The cruel frosts of Winter came  
 And stripped the dying trunk ;  
 The leaves were crowns, the boughs were  
 kings—  
 Brave blood the tree had drunk.

NAPOLEON BALLADS.

The traitor dukes and subject kings  
Fell off like Autumn leaves,  
As stripped as when the April time  
Laughs as old Winter grieves.  
Like blossoms from that wind-scourged thorn  
The traitors dropped from him—  
No wonder that his head was bent  
And that his eye was dim.

Shall I forget that April noon?  
The carriages in line,  
Like funeral hearses slowly came  
Through slanting sunbeams' shine.  
Who did they wait for—Balliard,  
Bussy, or Montesquiou,  
La Place, Jouanne, or Athalin,  
Vansowich or Flahaut?

The rest are gone, with sneer or jest,  
Regret, or fierce rebuke,—  
Even the valet lured away  
Last night the Mameluke.  
When Ney was false, who could expect  
A scullion to be true?  
Yet still around the close-shut gate  
I saw a faithful few.

Yes, still the old Imperial Guard  
Were under arms in line—  
Old friends of Austerlitz—the same  
In snow, or rain, or shine.  
Immovable, a wall of steel,  
You might have thought them dead,  
But for the sullen smouldering fire  
That in their eyes shone red.

One strikes, and through the opening door  
Napoleon appears :  
The ruffle of the drum was heard,  
Like thunder came the cheers ;  
The crimson flags blew in and out,  
The tremble of the steel  
Was visible, most visible !—  
What ! Frenchmen and not feel ?

Their caps upon the bayonets shook  
As when a conqueror comes  
To greet his soldiers—faster spread  
The rolling of the drums.  
And then a death-like hush so deep—  
You heard the thoughtless bird  
Upon the rosy almond bloom  
A sprinkling snow had furred.

You heard his measured steps, as quick  
He came down yonder stairs,  
His hand extended for those hands  
Held out to him in pairs.—  
HE WAS AMONGST THEM, ringed with steel,  
Erect and stern as when  
The foes he sought to crush at last  
Were gathered in his ken.

“ Farewell, my children ; bring the flag  
For me to kiss and bless ;  
The dying father thinks of thee  
In joy or in distress.  
For twenty years this eagle led  
Our trappers on kings,  
We who lit fires with sceptre-staffs,  
And counted crowns base things,

“ We now must part. With men like you  
I could have fought for years ;  
But then our country had been drenched  
With blood and mothers' tears.—  
I leave you, but ye still will serve  
France, that we so much love :  
God guard her from the ravening hawk,  
As angels guard the dove.

“ Faithful and brave, a long farewell—  
'T is *very* hard to part ;  
Would I could press my children all  
Unto their father's heart.”  
They brought the flag that Bertrand bore,  
He clasped it to his arms ;  
Not one but wept, the fiercest there—  
The drum beat the alarms.

*LAND IN SIGHT! HOME AT LAST!*

---

VIII.

Red flows the sea as the fierce flame blows,  
The inky cloud all crimson grows.  
Loud ring their shrieks, as the only boat  
With half-crazed women is set afloat;  
And now swift jets of smoke and fire  
From the blazing vessel the winds waft higher;  
And the wreck floats on o'er the glowing wave,  
Of all within her the burning grave.

IX.

Men on the cliffs, looking out to sea—  
A pale and shuddering company—  
See, as the wind shifts to the west,  
A floating light on the ocean-crest;  
And then a frame with thick ribs charred—  
A floating furnace, with timbers barred;  
And within this red-hot basket-cage  
A fierce fire white with a quenchless rage.

X.

To leeward a cloud of crimson spread,  
Fair over the dying and the dead,  
A cloud all starred with sparks that fast  
From the wreck in burning showers are cast.  
Slowly again night's pitying pall  
Spreads o'er the sea and the high cliff wall;  
And those who are saved from the fire and waves  
Kneel and pray to the God who saves.





### Death of Oberon.

TOLL the lilies' silver bells !  
 Oberon, the king, is dead !  
 In her grief the crimson rose  
 All her velvet leaves has shed.

Toll the lilies silver bells !  
 Oberon is dead and gone !  
 He who looked an emperor  
 When his glowworm crown was on.

Toll the lilies' silver bells !  
 Slay the dragonfly, his steed ;  
 Dig his grave within the ring  
 Of the mushrooms in the mead.

## The Black Coach.

AN OLD NORTHAMPTONSHIRE LEGEND.

THE roofless house at Ringwood Hall  
Stands mournful in the sun ;  
The porch is there, the door is gone,  
The roses trail and run  
Around the mossy window shaft—  
Once fashioned with such art and craft.

The Delameres have long died out ;  
The avenue grows wild ;  
The walks are dank with last year's leaves :  
Only the keeper's child  
Plays in the mournful banquet-room,  
Laughing amid the echoing gloom.

The old race dwindled age by age  
Till avarice crept in,  
Then drunkenness and leering lust,  
And homicide and sin.  
At last foul Murder came, and set  
His red foot on their coronet.

The chapel, see how bare and lone !  
Its rich west window gone—  
The saints, the martyrs, and the kings,  
That once the sun shone on ;  
And but one lonely knight to pray  
For all his old race passed away.

The stone urns on the pedestals  
Are green with velvet moss ;  
The shield above the green park gate  
Was long since rent across ;  
The scutcheon's choked with gathered dust,  
Upon the blazon there is rust.

On the damp drive the mushrooms bulb,  
Where rabbits trot and amble,  
The blackbird flits his jetty wings,  
And fawns love there to gambol.

Only the yew-tree seems to thrive :  
The stunted thorns are scarce alive.

The lutes and garlands on the porch,  
The orange lichens blurr ;  
The dial, see, is half defaced  
By many a mossy slur ;  
The motto ivy tendrils shroud—  
“Man's life is but a morning cloud.”

The windows are but skeletons ;  
And through their stony bars  
You see at night the glittering  
Of the cold Autumn stars.  
Upon the roof the long weeds grow,  
And Death's decay and ruin show.

When Spring comes dancing o'er the lea,  
And blossoms every sod ;  
When birds, in gratitude and joy,  
Rise, singing hymns to God ;  
You would not think that Sin had been,  
And poisoned all that house within.

When Summer ripples move the lake,  
And swans are sailing ermine white,  
In beauty proud and self content,  
And woods are filled with emerald light,—  
You would not think that spotted Sin  
Had feasted there her kith and kin.

Nor when the beeches, orange-brown,  
Glow by the water-side,  
When kingly Autumn dons his crown,  
In all his royal pride,—  
You would not think, at such a time,  
That there had once dwelt sin and crime.

But when the dead leaves' fluttering gold  
Fill the October skies,

*SIR JOHN CHANDOS AT CHARENTE.*

---

And when the wild ducks screaming shout,  
And echoes give replies,—  
You then might feel some ghostly trace  
Of the sad influence of the place.

And in the rainy Autumn nights,  
When winds are sobbing loud,  
When dogs moan from the outer court,  
And black grows every cloud—  
Ghost-lights gleam up the avenue,  
Lights answer from the windows too.

Dark figures, each one with a torch,  
Come slowly down the scaur,  
Chanting a low deep funeral hymn—  
Answered by echoes far ;  
And all the while the turret bell  
Tolls with a long and doleful knell.

And last, about the midnight hour,  
A jet black funeral coach

Comes rolling up the long black drive,  
And up the grand approach ;  
Stops at the doorless porch, they say,  
Then slowly vanishes away !

Some think it is the wicked lord,  
Who, seventy summers gone,  
On such a night brought home his bride—  
Her bridal splendour on ;  
And, wrathful at her wild regret,  
E'en in the bridal bed,  
At daybreak snatched his sword, and smote  
The sleeping maiden dead !

Yes ; as the sexton, one by one,  
Puts out the funeral lamps,  
Leaving the corpse alone and still,  
Amid the charnel damps ;  
So, one by one, Time does erase  
The glories of man's pomp and place.

---

*Sir John Chandos at Charente.*

*AFTER FROISSART.)*

[ON one occasion, during the wars of the Black Prince, Sir John Chandos, the Seneschal of Poitou, separated himself from the young Earl of Pembroke, who, in a moment of pride, had refused to accompany him in a foray into Anjou. The earl soon after, while halting at Charente, was surprised by a band of Frenchmen, who broke into the town, crying, "Our Lady of Sancerre for the Marshal of France !" and blockaded him in a preceptory of the Templars. The conclusion of the story, and the rescue of the earl, is given in our ballad.]

THE nights are cold at Candlemas, and the snow is on the roof,  
It lies on the broad roads three foot deep, and muffles every hoof :  
The spider's glued unto his web, the bird to roosting bough ;  
The shepherd, frozen by the fold, prays for the morning now.

The cressets on the whitened road cast shadows black and strange,  
Wavering o'er buried hedge and fence, past cabin and past grange :  
'Tis Pembroke and stout Chandos, with twice three hundred lances,  
And the red light that before them goes upon their spear-heads dances.



*SIR JOHN CHANDOS AT CHARENTE.*

---

Before those knights so amorous, so brave and *debonair*,  
The archers marched. Their carol rings clear through the frozen air ;  
But the earl rides silent and alone, wrathful and discontent,  
More like their prisoner than their chief—to Puirenon he went.

Behind crowd merchants of Narbonne, with many muleteers,—  
Their beasts bear cloth from Brussels, and furs from proud Bergeres,  
And golden silks from Alesandre and Damas cross the sea,  
Bright pearls from Ormuz, Eastern gems, and bales of spicerie.

Leaped up the beacons as they came, from roof and turret tall,  
And woke the burghers, as the light shone ruddy in the hall :  
The torches flashed down winding streets, and lit the market-place,  
And there was joy in every eye, and welcome on each face.

The knights of Brabant and Navarre, and they of Portingale,  
Put down the cup unemptied, and ceased the half-told tale ;  
For when the horns were three times wound, the drawbridge rattled down,  
And all the mailéd horsemen rode trampling through the town.

The sleeping city sprang to life at that deep hollow sound,  
Like will-o'-the-wisps the clustering lights ran gathering around ;  
And every voice united then in the universal glee,  
“All hail to Chandos and the flower of England's chivalry !”

Stern Pembroke, frowning in the van, brooked ill that cordial shout ;  
He bit his lip in anger hot at Chandos and the rout.  
By all the saints of France he vowed he'd not disgrace his peers,  
But, with his sixty lances, would gallop to Poitiers.

“Give place, ye rabble, mean and base !” and, without bow or sign,  
He turned again his charger's head—“Now follow, men of mine !”  
And the fire-sparks from their clattering heels lit all the path they went,  
As they spurred down the rocky path that leadeth to Charente.

“Now foul befall the black earl's pride,” quoth Chandos, with a smile ;  
“There'll come a day he'll need our help : let's rest us now the while.  
And I swear, by Our Lady of Sancerre, he shall bend twice his knee,  
Ere I put a lance in rest for him, whate'er his jeopardy.”

'Tis merry in the castle hall, where noble Chandos stands,  
And holds a cup of Cyprus wine in his uplifted hands :  
“God save ye, gallant gentlemen, ye noble hearts and true !  
I pray you drink to every dame that dwells in fair Anjou.”

*SIR JOHN CHANDOS AT CHARENTE.*

Gay arras, Babylonian wove, shone bright with threads of gold,  
The forkéd banners o'er their heads shook each its rustling fold ;  
The gleeful minstrels hushed their harps, and ceased their song and tale,  
As every knight waved high his hand, with "Noble Chandos, hail !"

Then the hippocras and spices were handed to each guest,  
Round went the flagon ceaselessly, for with it went the jest ;  
The feathers waved, steel armour shone, the tabards glittered fair,  
And Pleasure laughed as he barred out the frozen beggar Care.

The feast went on, the lights grew pale, 't was very near the dawn,  
But still the harp was vibrating, and still rang loud the horn ;  
The very warder at the gate was merry as his lord,—  
When there broke in a weary squire, holding a broken sword.

"Fair sir," he says, with feeble voice, "I've galloped from Charente,  
And my best blood the rocky path—I'm worn and travel-spent.  
The earl hath need of instant help, for he is sore bested."  
He spoke, and at the daïs reeled : they raised him—he was dead !

But Chandos gazed upon the ground, and then looked slowly up,  
Struck the oak board till the sparkling wine leaped from the golden cup ;  
Then bit his lips till the blood sprang out, and cried, with a look of pain,  
"The fool that sows the whirlwind must reap the hurricane."

He startled as the door flew wide, and a second page rushed in.  
"What news, boy, from the earl—speak—speak ! Do they the castle win ?  
Art dumb ?—be quick—dost bear to us a letter or a sign ?"  
The fainting varlet could not speak, but beckoned for the wine.

He knelt, and, from his doublet torn, drew out a golden ring :  
"This, this, with danger and with toil, from the brave earl I bring.  
In Mary's name, brave gentlemen, as you do hope for grace,  
As you do hope to look upon, once more, your lady's face——"

But Chandos turned him away, and leant upon his hand,  
He muttered low unto himself, and stirred the smouldering brand,  
Then struck the log that flashed up sparks with his war-axe a blow,  
And crushed it with his mailed heel, as one would do a foe.

Quoth he, "If all Touraine is out, 'twere but in vain to ride ;  
And if he *were* struck down and ta'en, it would but cool his pride."  
But gloom broke sudden from his brow : all knew the chief's intent,  
As he rose up, and shouted out, "*We'll gallop to Charente !*"

### THE SEXTONS' SUPPER.

---

He thrust the table from its place, and called for his steed.  
"We must not leave this gallant soul to perish in his need."  
He drew his vizor slowly close, as they rose up to cheer,  
And knelt him down to breathe a prayer—some say to hide a tear.

Then rang the hall with shout and cry, and every eye grew bright,  
The helms were laced, the spurs put on, and saddle-girths pulled tight;  
The seats were left in fiery haste, and sword-belts girded fast,  
The maces tied to saddle-bows, and cups to pages cast.

Some caps and mantles throw aside, some pennons do unfurl,  
Then shields braced on, and tightened bands, to hurry to the earl.  
"Advance the banners, in GOD's name!" the standard-bearer cries.  
"Set on," shouts Chandos, spurring fast, "lest the stout Pembroke dies!"

'Twas brave to see the banners wave the glittering spears among;  
'Twas brave to see the streamers all, bright glistening 'gainst the sun;  
But braver far it was to see stout Chandos, and his spears,  
Break through the ford by Auberoche with cries and lusty cheers.

The archers all together shot, the lances were in rest,  
Plumed heads were to the saddle bent, stout shields before each breast;  
With the sound of drum and bugle horn, with shout and battle din,  
They swept into the leaguered town, and through the press broke in.

---

### The Sextons' Supper.

(AFTER HOLBEIN.)

THE Plague, his black hand lifted,  
Was floating down the Rhine,  
His bark a soft-lined coffin  
(On each side grew the vine);  
He struck the miller at his wheel,  
The woodman by his tree;  
Before him rose the prayer and hymn,  
Behind, the *Dirige*.  
He found them spinning wedding robes,  
He left them digging graves;  
High over faces pale and wrung  
The earth heaped up its waves.

He struck the baron at his gate,  
The peasant at the plough,  
And from his sable banner shook  
Darkness on every brow.  
At this time in a belfry-room  
Five sextons drained the wine,  
Red from the toil that brought the fee  
And made their old eyes shine.  
Their seats were cedar coffin-planks,  
All velvet-trimmed and soft;  
The chalice-cups, by them defiled,  
Were filled and emptied oft.

*THE SEXTONS' SUPPER.*

They drank "A long reign to King Plague!"  
"A wet year and a foul!"  
As screaming through the open loops  
Flew in and out the owl.  
Their shirts were made of dead men's vests  
(Dead men are meek and dumb),  
And each one wore a dead knight's ring  
Upon his thievish thumb.

Down from the boarded floor above  
The heavy bell-rope swings,  
It coils among the bowls and flasks,  
The cups and drinking things.  
The cresset throws a gloom of black  
Upon the red-tiled floor—  
Three faces dark—on two the lights  
Their golden lustres pour.

Beside the table sink the steps  
That lead into a vault—  
A treasure-house no thieves but five  
Dared ever yet assault.  
And through the darkness to the left  
Winds up the belfry stair—  
Up to the old bell-chamber—  
Up to the cooler air.

The wall was hung with coffin-plates,  
The dates rubbed duly out  
(Dead men are very dull and slow  
In finding these things out).  
They toast "The Doctors of Cologne,  
Who keep the church-spades bright!"  
Such toasts as these, such feast as that,  
Were fit for such a night.

Far, far above among the bells  
The wind blew devil fierce,  
The sleet upon the beggar fell,  
And stabbed him carte and tierce.  
There was a pother in the roofs,  
And such a clash of tiles,  
That dying creatures' sobs and groans  
Were heard around for miles.

They drink to "Peter and to Paul!"  
And "All men underground!"  
Then with a laugh, and a wink, and nudge,  
The passing-bell they sound.  
They drink to the tree that gives the plank,  
And the tree that guards the dead—  
The coal-black tree with the blood-drop fruit,  
So poisonous, soft, and red.

Is God, then, sleeping? No! See there,  
How one tears at his throat,  
And baring neck and shoulder,  
Bids all his fellows note.  
A plague-spot, blue and swollen,  
Shows ghastly on the skin,  
And on his knees he prays to CHRIST  
To yet forgive his sin.

Dead! And the eldest tolling  
The rope that o'er them hung,  
Called, with a curse, "Lads, fill your cups,  
Let another song be sung!"  
Then reels—his white face sickens,  
And as he staggers down,  
Another drags at the heavy bell  
Stamped with the cross and crown.

So every time a toper fell  
Another rose to toll,  
And all the rest screamed out a dirge  
For the sinner's passing soul.  
And round they stirred the gallon jug,  
And high they flung the cup,  
With half a song and half a prayer  
They tossed it, filling up.

Now but one left, and he, though faint,  
Staggered towards the rope,  
And tolls—first draining cup and bowl,  
Half dead, without a hope—  
Tolls, till the old tower rocks again—  
Tolls, with a hand of lead—  
Then falls upon the wine-drenched floor  
Upon his fellows—dead!



### Chivalry.

THERE came a knight at evening-time  
 Unto a lonely ford ;  
 Two children prayed to him for alms,  
 "For JESUS' sake our LORD !" "

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"Good sir !" they cried, "for Him who died,  
 Carry us o'er the flood !"  
 He lifted them on his saddle-bow,  
 And rode with them through the wood.

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*THE TRAMP'S SONG.*

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His chest was like the mountain bull's,  
And he was strong of arm ;  
Upon his face, though seamed and scarred,  
There was a Sabbath calm.

He rode a stately destrière,  
All dappled with the gray,  
And splashed into the shallowing ford,  
At the closing of the day.

A golden statue shone the knight,  
Wrapped in his pliant mail ;  
His banner, of the crimson sheen,  
Blew flapping like a sail.

The water lapped against his feet  
And o'er his saddle-bow ;  
He rode until his charger's mane  
Was washing to and fro.

And when he reached the gravelly bank,  
Down in the violet flowers  
And in the fern those children laid,  
Safe from the chilling showers.

He guarded them from wolf and boar  
Until the break of day ;  
And at the dawn he gave them alms,  
And sped them on their way.

He slew the wild thief in his den ;  
He freed the ravaged town ;  
He helped the poor man at the plough,  
And struck his tyrant down.

In at the widow's broken pane  
He flung the welcome gold ;  
He sacked the cruel baron's tower,  
And burned the robber's hold.

He never knelt except to God ;  
To good men he was meek ;  
But to the bad, his voice it seemed  
As when the thunders speak.

How did he die?—with back to tree,  
His death-wound in his breast,  
With shivered sword still raised to strike,  
And broken lance in rest.

And now he lies upon his tomb,  
Rapt in eternal prayer ;  
And round him windows jewel-dyed  
Shine with a radiance fair.

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*The Tramp's Song.*

THE trumper's life is wild and free,  
From man he keeps aloof,  
And when he can sleep beneath a tree,  
Doth shun the prisoning roof.

How many a noon in warm sweet June  
He lies on a bed of flowers,  
And lulled to sleep by the blackbird's tune,  
He dreams away the hours.

### THE INUNDATION.

Or where the nodding hazel-trees  
Are linked by a flowery chain,  
And the honeysuckle lures the bees  
To hide from the passing rain,—  
Couched on the aromatic thyme,  
With its blossom's purple flush,  
There many an hour in the April-tide  
He lies to hear the thrush.

So where on the heath the living gold  
Blooms on the prickly furze,  
And where the purple thistles bold  
Shed oft their downy burrs,

And the well-cropped grass is velvet soft,  
And the broom grows tall and fair,  
He lies on his back and gazes up  
Into the wandering air.

And the bramble yields him coal-black fruit,  
And the thorn its scarlet hip,  
And the brook that washes the oak's snake root  
Brings nectar to his lip.  
And in the chilly Autumn-time,  
When the leaves drop thick and fast,  
He lights his fire in some warm deep nook,  
And laughs at the threats of the blast.

### The Inundation.

*FOUNDED ON AN OLD SCOTCH RHYME.*

SAYS the Tweed to the Till,  
"What makes you run so still?"  
Till says to Tweed,  
"Though you run with speed,  
And I run slow,  
Yet, where you drown one man,  
I can drown two!"

Says the Till to the Tweed,  
"Where shall we meet?—  
By the Cross of Swinton,  
Or in Berwick Street?"  
Says the Tweed to the Till,  
"I am deadly though slow ;

For three men that cross my fords,  
Two sink below."

"The Eden will join us.  
Her banks are all brimming ;  
And down her red waters  
The Kelpies are swimming ;  
Deep, dark, and rushing,  
The Whiteadder's pouring.  
When we four meet again,  
There'll be a roaring !—  
Women's loud wailing,  
And peasants imploring !"



## The Twelve Brothers.

MARCH, thou bully grim and gruff,  
Ever grumbling, hoarse, and rough !  
Always howling at the door  
Of the rich man or the poor ;  
Screaming words that do not reach—  
Words unlike our human speech.  
Down the hollow chimney-bore,  
Hark the raging tyrant's roar !  
Beat not with thy sleety flail,  
Or the keen lash of thy hail,  
Infant Spring, that tender child,  
Frightened when thou even smiled,  
Cruel March, sir !

"Here is APRIL!" cuckoo cries  
From the tall tree near the skies ;  
"April! April!" croaks the frog  
From his dank hole in the bog ;  
"April!" sings the thrush again  
From his clay nest in the lane.  
April, 't is thy merry weather  
Makes the wild colt burst his tether ;  
April in his royal dower  
Has soft sunbeam and sharp shower ;  
April is the very soul of youth,  
Eye of love, and heart of truth.—  
That is April.

MAY brings all the flowers at once,  
Teased by rains and kissed by suns ;  
Now the meadow's white and gold ;  
Now the lambs leap in the fold.  
May is wreathed with virgin white ;  
Glad May dances all the night ;  
May laughs, rolling 'mong the flowers,  
Careless of the wintry hours.  
May's storms turn to sunny rain,  
And when Iris springs again  
All the angels clap their hands,  
Singing in their seraph bands.—  
Such is May, boy.

JUNE is crowned, for June is king  
Of our woods and everything ;  
June's the Emperor of Love ;  
Green leaves wave, his throne above,  
Leagues of roses at his feet  
Spread so soft, and crimson sweet.  
Like man's soul from out the grave,  
Springs the lark above the wave  
Of the green corn on the slope,  
Teaching us to soar and hope.  
Yes, June's king and lord of all,  
Till the Summer roses fall.—  
Kingly June, sir

JULY, too, is rich and royal ;  
All the birds to him are loyal :  
Still, as in the golden June,  
All the air is song and tune.  
Sluggard, heedless night or morn,  
Muse not by the ripening corn,  
Dreaming hours and hours away,  
Beside the long and dusty way,  
That leads unto the distant town,  
Miles and miles across the down,  
Smiling to hear the sheep-bell's chime  
Toll for all thy lavished time.—  
Lazy July !

AUGUST! tell me, then, what is he ?  
He is red-faced and most busy :  
See him there, with sickle keen,  
Strut the bristling sheaves between,  
Shouting to the reapers ; then  
Drawing from its shady den,  
In his wallet, by the brook,  
Big brown jar, and, gracious, look !  
How he froths the mighty cup !  
And how quick he drains it up !  
Of the brothers twelve, this one  
Bears the best the burning sun.—  
Bravo, August !



THE TWELVE BROTHERS.

"You must not forget SEPTEMBER!"  
Could I fail me to remember  
That brave woodman, and his stroke  
At the gnarled and iron oak?  
Or his swift steel's circling flash,  
Smiting at the stubborn ash,  
While the pheasant's jewelled wing,  
Like a firework you up-fling,  
Flashes from the dying fern,  
Where the brambles crimson burn?  
That's September. Though he's old,  
Little reck's he of the cold.—  
Brave September!

"Curb your Pegasus! be sober!  
Where is that strong man OCTOBER?"  
Bend those forest boughs aside,  
And you'll see the fellow ride  
Over brook and double rail,  
Over turnpike-gate and pale;  
Watch him breast the thorny brake  
So his fiery way to make;  
Hear his clear defiant horn  
Set all coward churls at scorn.  
That's October. How the deer  
Tremble at his lusty cheer!—  
Hail, October!

Though I sorrow it to say,  
NOVEMBER is a churl alway;  
Miserly, beside the fire,  
Just outside the echoing choir,  
Sits he peevishly, and ponders  
On this life and all its wonders,  
Hearing through the grudging screen  
Organ notes, that slip between  
Prayers for dead men and dead hopes,  
While the priests, in 'broidered copes,

Sing to heaven; yet not for him  
Goes up the incense or the hymn.—  
Fie, November!

Best of all, old King DECEMBER,  
Laughs beside the burning ember,  
With his children round his knees,  
And a look of jovial ease.  
He is crowned Lord of Misrule—  
Here's his Queen, and there's his fool.  
He is wreathed with frosty green,  
And ever the gay song between  
"Wassail!" shouts he, "health to all!"  
And re-echoes the old hall.—  
Kind December!

JANUARY's old and stern,  
Grudging every coal they burn;  
He's a screw, and right ill stored  
Is his larder and his board;  
Hard of face and hard of heart—  
See him hurry with a start  
To bar angrily the door  
In the mild face of the poor.  
When he's cold upon his bier,  
What lone watcher will be near  
January?

FEBRUARY's a peevish wight—  
Never cozy but at night:  
Whining for the Winter gone,  
Though the Spring is coming on.  
Weeping underneath the tree,  
Like a mute who earns his fee,  
For the pleasure nights of Yule,  
And the increased price of fuel.  
Those may like him, they, who may—  
I will never go thy way,  
February!



## Bacchus and the Water Thieves.

(See Frontispiece.)

JOURNEYING from Naxos swiftly towards Crete,  
Leaving behind him now the Cyclades,  
Those island gems that necklace the blue sea  
With strings of pearl, and emerald sporades,  
Bacchus, as the swift bark skimmed, dipped, and leapt,  
Beneath the fluttering canvas softly slept.

The God had left his panthers in fair Crete,  
His thyrsus-bearers and his corybantes,  
His frolic satyrs and his Indian pomp,  
In vineyard caverns and in forest haunts ;  
And, now alone, his beauteous limbs at rest,  
The cypress-planks of a poor galley prest.

The boat by magic moved upon the wave,  
The sea-nymphs drew it through the deep unseen ;  
Great dolphins gambolled round the frothing keel,  
White sea-birds flew above the ripples green.  
While Iris from a bright cloud smiled to see  
That youthful God disdain the wrathful sea.

Sudden from Lemnos, rising bleak and blue,  
Down sea-side crags the eager robbers came,  
Leaping to man their boats and seize the prize,  
Seeing the heedless craft. No fear or shame  
Restrained that rude fierce horde ; a hundred oars  
At the same moment pushed off from those shores.

Waving their knives and darts, they leaped aboard,  
Yelling out war-cries with a drunken glee ;  
Flashing their axes, and their crooked swords,  
In ravenous rage and murderous ecstasy !  
But still the youth upon the sunny prow  
Slept with one hand crossing his fair white brow.

Enraged to find no spices, wine, or gold,  
With blows they woke him, and with laughter grim,  
Bound him unto the mast with biting cords,  
That made the blood spring from each radiant limb.

*BACCHUS AND THE WATER THIEVES.*

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Then piling pine-knots, vowed to sacrifice  
To Vulcan this fair youth, their trembling prize.

"Spare me!" he cried: "my mother sighs for me  
In Naxos, where my father, old and blind,  
Begs for his bread. O Fate! thou mystery,  
That brought me to this woe. Oh, seamen kind,  
Spare a poor youth, so free from sin and blame,  
And do not give me to that cruel flame!"

Then one relented; but they stabbed that man,  
And threw him bleeding to the wistful sharks;  
And then 'mid cymbal-clash and barbarous drum,  
Blew from the smouldering logs the crimson sparks;  
Unbound the lad and threw him on his knees,  
Singing their savage hymns to the hushed seas.

Then he raised up his hands unto the sun,  
And prayed in agony to Father Jove.  
And lo! a strength divine came to his heart,  
And thunder answered him from far above.  
Now he stood luminous, a starry crown  
Glittering upon his brow and tresses brown.

And, suddenly, the rigging's knotted ropes  
Were changed to creeping tendrils of the vine;  
And from the mast the purple clusters hung—  
Every rich berry swollen with red wine.  
The very bulwarks began next to grow,  
And long green shoots rose from the hold below.

And little curling horns of tendrils spread  
Round all the canvas, and continually  
Rose through each plank. Then those base coward men,  
With one consent, leaped headlong in the sea,  
And, changed to dolphins, hiding from the day,  
Pursued by sharks, in terror broke away!

Now in his floating vineyard, Bacchus passed  
To longing Crete, and Iris graciously  
Arched him with rainbows, and a glory shone.  
To welcome him o'er all the neighbouring sea;  
While in the distance angry lightnings played  
Wrathful on Lemnos, and that isle dismayed!

## The Unpaid Musician.

UPON the willow, the tree that weeps,  
The robin sits humble and still,  
Hearing the lisp of the pretty wee brook,  
And the silvery chirp of the rill.  
See the black bulrush ; it bobs and bobs  
As proud as ever you will ;  
And whether the wind is low or high,  
The rushes will never be still.

Robin, with breast in a red, red puff,  
Tunes, and carols, and sings,  
As over the water the dragon-flies skim  
On their golden and emerald wings.  
And the gnats are waltzing as fast, as fast,  
As if they were all mad things :  
You'd think there'd been fifty fiddlers there,  
Sawing and scraping their strings.

And the dace in their silvery harlequin coats  
Caper, and twist, and twine :  
The water-rat sees them under the weeds  
Glimmer, and glitter, and shine.  
The king of them all stands there on his head,  
And watches the dance combine ;  
The eft looks out from his wet bank-hole,  
And envies the dancers from his soul.

The robin gets never a fee from them,  
Though he sings by the long, long hour ;  
Yet he carols his best, and all for love,  
For love is the poet's dower.  
And he thinks as he dozes by night at roost,  
" Well, I never earned scrap or groat ;  
Yet I did my best, it must be confessed,  
And was true to every note.

" Still to-morrow, to-morrow, when larks arise,  
I'll hie me again to the brook,  
And I'll sing those little merry-go-rounds  
No song set down in a book ;  
But one from my own heart, all my own :  
My thanks to the God above ;  
For Love has its own reward, you see,  
And its best reward is Love."

There are poets even among the birds,  
And this was one of the lot :  
He sang all day to the dancing fish,  
Yet never a stiver he got.  
Well ! poets are born to sing and to starve :  
It has been always so ;  
Yet 't is a gift, the gift to sing—  
That, Robin, you should know.

## The Birth of Gunpowder.

A STARVING monk, by chemic art,  
Drew poisons from the flowers ;  
Like liquid moonshine, he distilled  
The quicksilver in showers.

BLACK was his name, and black his heart,  
An evil man and dire,  
Or why lean stooping night and day  
With eyes upon the fire ?

*THE BIRTH OF GUNPOWDER.*

He made the gold arise, a tree,  
And branch out glittering veins;  
He smiled to view, 'mid scarlet coals,  
The salamander's pains.

He made the amber wine blush red  
When he stirred round the flask:  
Full fifty Summers' yellow moons  
Had found him at his task.



He bade the mummy in the chest  
Pant with convulsive throes;  
Homunculus's flaccid cheek  
To blossom like a rose;

Dry skeletons to shake and dance  
Around him in a ring;

He called, and lo! the clouds would poise,  
And fold each snowy wing.

He stamped: red creatures from the mine  
Broke out in wafts of fire;  
Yet he was poor, for Popes and kings  
Know not that word—*ASPIRE*.

## HOPE.

He was the scorn of barons' halls,  
The scoff of jester fools;  
The dogs flew at him when he came  
To doors of pimps and tools.

Oh, hollow-cheeked the thinker was,  
And very wan and pale;  
His frock was patched and clouted like  
The fisher's oldest sail.

The children pointed at his beard,  
And laughed to scorn his age;  
The very clowns would leave their ploughs  
To pelt the wandering sage.

One night, when autumn moonbeams shed  
Soft crimson on his hand,  
They say he broke his rod, and freed  
The spirits of his band.

There came dark figures through the fog  
And struck a vein that bled;  
He scraped the Bible's parchment clean,  
And signed the bond with red.

Though poor and famine-pinched he was,  
He was a king of earth;  
And yet in forty devils' names  
He cursed his day of birth.

At once the lust of knowing died,  
And, like a burning flame,

Fierce ruling in his brain and heart,  
The lust of power came.

"The *secret*!" cried he. "Deepest hell,  
Yield it, for it is mine;  
I give my soul, O Lucifer,  
And every part is thine."

He swore by all the blood CHRIST shed,  
For one more mighty spell  
He'd yield all hope of heaven's bliss,  
And fling his soul in hell.

That instant, as he broke his flasks  
Together in the flame,  
An earthquake shook the riven vault,  
And, lo! the wonder came.

He saw hell's secret writ in fire,  
Then, swooning, reeled and sunk:  
This was hot nitre's devil's birth—  
God's curses on this monk!

A thunder-clap split roof and tower,  
And shook the sleeping town,  
Then, with a crash of coming doom,  
Blew all the abbey down.

Upon a blackened heap of stones,  
Scorched, shapeless, torn, and shrunk,  
One hand upon a crucible,  
They found the cursed monk.

## Hope.

A MAGICIAN gave me gold,  
And I locked it in a chest,  
Safe as a lover's secret  
Within a lover's breast.

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When the rainy days gloomed down,  
Rotting my piled-up sheaves,  
I opened the treasure casket,  
And there were only *leaves*.

## The Nine Spirit.

THE lists were set, the tents were pitched,  
The rosy country people clustered,  
The flags flew forth, the herald's train  
Around the great pavilion mustered;  
When, from what region no one knew,  
Rode in a stately stranger knight,  
And, without word of courtesy,  
Addressed him to the coming fight.

Like a fair image all of gold  
He rode, careering round the lists,  
As the rude warders checked the crowd  
With truncheon-strokes and blows of fists.  
When the fierce trumpet had blown thrice  
All people's eyes were eager turned  
To where the radiance of the sun  
A glory on his helmet burned.

His saddle-housing was half gold,  
Gold spangled shone his ostrich feather,  
Like a winged creature of the stars,  
He blazed, that radiant July weather.  
Upon his breast a golden sun,  
Upon his helm two silver stars,  
With vizor down the stranger rode,  
The very prototype of Mars.

Without a bow to lord or dame,  
Without due homage to the king,  
Fierce, hot, and swift as running flame,  
Around the dark red trampled ring,  
With poising lance and shaking sword,  
He spurred and churned the tilt-yard dust;  
His sword was of the spotless steel,  
His battle-axe was one of trust.

When the harsh trumpets blew together  
The knights met, rough as northern seas,  
With angry shouts, war-cries, and clamour,  
As of the blast that fells great trees.

Swift through them, like a thunderbolt  
From storm-clouds riven, broke the knight;  
Unharm'd he rode, the victor proved  
Of that wild, jostling, clashing fight.

Five spears had broken on his breast,  
Yet he was heart-whole. Cold he laughed  
When axes snapped upon his helm,  
And maces shivered at the haft.  
He bore him on and waved his spear,  
Then made his charger leap and prance,  
Or caracole, with spring and bound,  
As he dashed onward with his lance.

The prize was his, he donned the crown,  
But never spoke nor kissed his hand,  
Nor deigned a look to where there lay  
Four knights loud groaning on the sand,  
And when the people gave a cheer,  
He flung them glittering showers of gold.  
Then, without homage, word, or smile,  
Rode sternly forth across the wold.

The proud king sent to call him back,  
But he rode on, and never turned  
Until they touched his silver robe:  
Then his fierce eyes upon them turned.  
He drew his falchion whistling forth,  
And slew the first: "On him the blood!"  
He cried, and stately rode away,  
Down a dark vista of the wood.

"Out on the knave!" the monarch stormed,  
And leapt upon his snowy barb.  
"Who am I, slaves, and who is this  
That dares to spit upon my garb?"  
Crowned as he was, he led the chase,  
And all his train rode humble then;  
They overtook the stranger knight  
Beside a brook deep in the glen.

## THE DEPARTURE OF CRASSUS.

Wrathful he proved, and slew the king,  
And from his temples tore the crown ;  
Then rode amongst the trembling train,  
Smiting the bravest of them down.

Yet, when they struck, they struck the air :  
The knight was gone, nor left a sign ;  
But from the rocks this echo came,  
" I AM THE SPIRIT OF THE MINE ! "

## The Departure of Crassus.

[ " THE Tribune Atticus declared the expedition to Parthia impious, and prohibited by all the auguries ; and when the proud Crassus determined to march with the Roman army to Parthia, he waited for him at the gate of the city, and having there ready a chafing-dish, with fire in it, he threw thereon perfumes, and poured libations, as invoking certain great deities, he devoted Crassus and his army as they passed by to destruction. " — PLUTARCH. ]

BY the gates of the Seven-hilled City  
The wrathful Tribune stands,  
Up-pointing to the heavens,  
With a goblet in his hands.  
" What means this mad fool's juggling ? "  
The angry Crassus cried,  
And darkly frowned the warrior,  
In a hundred battles tried.

But not a word the Tribune spoke,  
As on the altar fire  
He poured a red libation,  
To hell's almighty sire.  
Then Crassus reined his chafing steed,  
But did not dare look up,  
As the Tribune splashed the lavish wine  
From a great golden cup.

The sky, that had been blue before,  
Grew dark at the Augur's frown,  
And from a sullen thunder-cloud  
Lightning came streaming down.  
" Speak, Tribune, by the Gods, I pray,  
Why are thy looks downcast ?  
When Rome sent forth her armies  
Thou never wert the last. "

Now on the altar's rising flame  
Perfumes the Augur threw,  
Then raised a terror-stricken face  
As he hell's secrets knew.  
" O Crassus ! turn thy banners back !  
Eagles should guard their nest.  
How can I tell the fearful words  
That burst my swelling breast ? "

" Speak, fool ! Have I not heart to bear  
The worst thy tongue can tell ?  
Ay ! though 't was Pluto brought it  
From the very jaws of hell. "  
" Then hear, " cried mournful Atticus,  
" The dream I had last night. —  
I swear by great Olympus,  
By Mars and by Jove's might.

" From under helm sword-dinted  
Floats down thy long grey hair,  
Upon thy broad shield brazen  
It waves in the stormy air.  
The eagle standard near thee  
Seems like Jove's guardian bird.  
Alas ! for the evil tidings  
That from the Fates I heard.



## THE BATTLE PAINTER.

"I see broad plains wide-spreading—  
An ocean of brown sand ;  
I see great clouds of horsemen  
Gird round a weary band ;  
And on a knoll of palm-trees,  
Cowered down beneath a shield,  
A Roman, reft of armour,  
Who scarce his sword can wield.

"I see upon a lance a head  
Held up with cruel shouts,—  
Yes, father, 't is thy son's dark locks,  
The sport of the cruel rout.  
Lost on the sand plain trackless,  
Faint, strugglè on the flying,  
And to the knees of weary men  
Clings many a soldier dying."

"A truce to these silly fables !"  
Crassus in anger cried.

"Am I a Sabine stripling,  
In but one battle tried ?  
Far o'er the Indian mountains  
This eagle now shall soar,  
Far o'er the Parthian frontier,  
To the broad Oxus shore.

"But why stay here and dally words ?  
Push on the banners, then !  
Leave prophecies and auguries  
For priests and doting men."  
As Crassus spoke he lashed with rage  
The charger he bestrode,  
And struck him with his dagger-point  
As with an ox's goad.

## The Battle Painter.

### I.

WILD horsemen billowing round a planted flag,  
Pistols red flashing, sabres reaping fast,  
Whirlpools of pikes, maimed men trod underfoot,  
The sulphur-smoke of cannon rolling past ;  
And in the midst a proud white tossing plume,—  
The chief's, who, wrestling with a stalwart Croat,  
Or Pole, or Turk, yells out his battle-cry,  
While hewing madly at the other's throat.

### II.

You know such pictures ; Wouvermanns has done  
Some not unlike, with ever a white horse  
Focussing out a light amid the gloom,  
Giving the masses unity and force.  
Always a standard, while sore wounded men  
Grapple upon the ground with armour strewn,  
And shattered drum and banners wet with gore,  
And helmets beaten in and bucklers hewn.

*THE BATTLE PAINTER.*

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III.

Don Rinaldo de Montalba, battle painter—  
He who left us many score such things,—  
Was wont to rouse his genius, we are told,  
Not by deep draughts from the Castalian springs,  
By beating charges on a Turkish drum,  
Nor clashing cymbals ; no, by no device  
So tame as these, but by a daring stroke,  
A vigorous and chivalrous artifice.

IV.

He clothed a figure in a coat of mail,  
Helmet and cuirass, breastplate, target too,  
Tassets and pauldrons, buckled sure and firm,  
Each plate of armour fitting close and true ;  
Then with a giant's huge two-handed sword,  
In a feigned fury he drove at the steel,  
Slashing it into shreds, with sturdy blows  
That might have made the proudest Paynim reel.

V.

Having well smitten, hewn, and stabbed, and struck,  
He calmly placed his sword upon its rack,  
And seized his brushes, his strained canvas set,  
His easel planted, and with bended back,  
And steadfast head bent down, portrayed the scenes  
His fancy now was teeming with, and fierce  
With furious pencil pictured storms of horse,  
And clouds of Pandours, hot at *carte* and *tierce*.

VI.

Don Rinaldo de Montalba, battle painter,  
Rudely to us, poets and painters all,  
Did teach this simple lesson : still to work  
With fiery ardour, turning this earth-ball,  
And all in sea and sky, unto our use,  
To help us onward up the arduous mount,  
Where Phoebus sits enthroned, and sweet below  
Ripples with music Aganippe's fount.



## The Falconer's Rant.

OH! but to see him, lad,  
Swoop on the pheasant!  
None has a bolder bird,  
Gentle or peasant;  
Talk of your merlin,  
For the deer-stalking,  
See how he bears his hood,  
Proud to the hawking!

How his red tassel shakes  
When he is screaming,  
Beating his wings to fly,  
Eyeballs all gleaming,  
Fretting upon the fist,  
Eager for mounting  
Over the manor house,  
Over the fountain!

Twinkle his jesses, sir,  
Over the snow,  
Where the tern in the reeds  
Watches them. "Oh!  
Hey ho, bird! Ho! ho!  
Hey! gar, gar, gar, gar!"  
Swift as a lightning-flash,  
Quick as a star.

## The Antwerp Image-Breakers.

*DURING THE REVOLT OF THE LOW COUNTRIES FROM THE SPANIARDS, 1566.*

YESTER' NIGHT I shot ten down,  
Monday clove a shaven crown—  
That beat all; but—golden loo!—  
I quite forgot the other two.

Now the old kirk is alight  
It will flare all through the night—  
Altars, crucifix, and shrine:  
Curse the Mass and drink this wine.

Pile the chasubles and copes—  
Why, here's clothes for fifty Popes!  
How the incense stinks! but whesh!—  
That's the greasy abbot's flesh.

Burn the mass-books, red and gold—  
Here's a Breviary—but hold!  
Scorch the Fathers, twenty score:  
They will build the fire up more.

Break the benches, Orangemann:  
Here's a work for Lutheran.  
Hoog and Hendrick, mind the fire—  
Hear it bellow in the choir!

Cratz and Henders, hew the roof;  
Toppler, 'ware the beams, and Hoof!  
Let the saints go—what a roar!  
Hell has got five Papists more!

"TIME BRINGS ROSES."

"Here's a priest we caught at prayer!"  
Would the rascal had more hair!  
Then we'd hang him to the vane,  
There to bleach in sun and rain.

Tie the match-cord round his thumb,  
Take this scarf and gag him dumb.  
When I fire my pistol off,  
Drag the Papist to the trough.

Scoop me out this diamond eye:  
Holy Virgin jewels? Fie!  
See that saint in cloth of gold;—  
Paul made tents, so we are told.

Chop that screen up; lop the throne—  
Only Popes should sit alone;  
Smash that blood-red window-pane:  
Black Rome's loss is Fleming's gain.

Shout!—the smoke comes—brothers, shout!  
And the quick fire-tongues leap out.  
Ha! the nave has got it—loo!  
And the roof is catching too!

Now the end of all begins—  
Heaven helps their many sins.  
Down the beams crash through the dark!  
What a splash of smoke and spark!

Three monks cower beside the bell,  
Nearly red hot; faster swell,  
Stifling smoke-cloud, so it smother  
One by one each praying brother.

Hoo! the old pile's gone at last!  
One had thought it would stand fast.  
Hurrah! for the Pope's nest burnt!  
Isn't our day's pay well earnt?

"Time brings Roses."

GERMAN PROVERB.

THORNS and thistles in my path.—  
"Well, *you* sowed them!" Blabo proses.  
Proverb, like a sword flash out—  
    *"Time brings roses."*

Gall and wormwood for my drink.—  
"Well, *you* brewed it!" Bufo glozes.  
Proverb, be my targe and dart—  
    *"Time brings roses."*

Fortune? Yes, a house of cards:  
Care Hope's mortgage soon forecloses.  
Blessed proverb! cheer my heart—  
    *"Time brings roses."*





### The Father of the Regiment.

(AN OLD GRENADIER'S STORY OF AN EPISODE IN THE RETREAT OF NAPOLEON'S "GRANDE ARMÉE" FROM MOSCOW.)

THICK snow-wreaths weighed upon the firs,  
 Snow shrouded all the plain,  
 Snow brooded in the dusky clouds,  
 Snow matted the chill rain,  
 Snow filled the valleys to the brim,  
 Snow whitened all the air ;  
 The snow-drifts on the Dnieper road  
 Blinded us with their glare.

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The white snow on our eagles weighed,  
 It capped each crimson plume ;  
 Knee-deep it now began to rise,  
 Striking us all with gloom.  
 It clotted on our waggon wheels,  
 And on our knapsacks weighed,  
 It clung to every soldier's breast,  
 And every bayonet-blade.

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THE FATHER OF THE REGIMENT.

It quenched the shells and dulled the shot  
That round us faster fell,  
As all our bayonets glancing moved  
Down the long Russian dell  
That to the Dnieper river bore.  
Ney battled in our rear ;  
Griloff was nearly on us then,  
The Cossacks gathered near.

The Russian lancers charged our guards,  
Our grenadiers, and horse ;  
The Russian serfs, with axe and knife,  
Were gathering in force,  
As floods of us with carts and guns  
Bore down upon the ridge  
That led, by snowy swathes and slopes,  
Unto the Dnieper bridge.

The sun, a dull broad spot of blood,  
Smouldered through icy clouds ;  
The snow, in blinding heavy flakes,  
Was weaving soldiers' shrouds.  
Here lay a powder-waggon split,  
Its wheels all black and torn,  
And there a gun half buried in  
The ruts its weight had worn.

Drums splashed with blood and broken  
swords  
Were scattered everywhere ;  
Our shattered muskets, shakos pierced,  
Lay partly buried there.  
Guns foundered, chests of cartridge burst,  
Lay by the dead defaced ;  
By hasty graves of hillocked snow  
You could our path have traced.

Still one battalion firm was left  
(Made up of Davoust's men),  
"The *Vieille Roche*" we called the band,  
In admiration then.  
The "Father of the Regiment,"  
De Maubourg, led us on,  
With the old Roman's iron will,  
Though hope had almost gone.

Two sons he had, who guarded him  
From every Cossack spear ;  
One was a grenadier, whose heart  
Had never known a fear ;  
The other boy a lusty drum  
Beat by his father's side ;  
I often saw the father smile  
To see the stripling's pride.

There came a rush of ponderous guns,  
Grinding the red churned snow,  
Making their way o'er dying men  
Unto the bridge below.  
Ney gathered close his prickly squares  
To keep the Russians back,  
For fast those yelling Cossacks came  
Upon our bleeding track.

Maubourg was there erect and firm ;  
I saw him through the fire ;  
He stooped to kiss a dying friend,  
Then seemed to rise the higher.  
Great gaps the Russian cannon tore  
Through our retreating ranks,  
As slowly, grimly, Ney drew back  
Unto the river banks.

Shot in the knee I saw Maubourg,  
Borne by his sons—slow—slow ;  
They staggered o'er the muddy ruts,  
And through the clogging snow.  
"Fly, leave me, children ! Dear to France  
Young lives are," then he said.  
They both refused : a round shot came,  
And struck the eldest—dead.

The boy knelt weeping by his side,  
Trying in vain to lift  
The old man's body, which but sank  
The deeper in the drift.  
"Leave me, my child !" he cried again.  
"Think of your mother—go.  
We meet in heaven. I will stay,  
Death is no more my foe."

*THE FOUNTAIN SPIRIT.*

---

The boy fell weeping on his breast,  
And there had gladly died,  
But I released his clutching hands,  
And tore him from his side.  
One kiss—no more—and then he went,  
Beating his drum for us ;  
I did not dare to turn and see  
The old man perish thus.

Again there came a rush of spears,  
But we drove on the guns,  
We—bronze and iron with the heat  
Of the Egyptian suns.

The eagles led—our bayonets pressed  
Over the Dnieper bridge ;  
Ney was the last to turn and pass  
Down the long gory ridge.

The boy became a marshal, sirs ;  
I saw him yesterday  
Talking to Soult, who loves right well  
To chat of siege and fray.  
He often finds our barracks out  
And comes to see us all,  
We who escaped from Moscow's fire,  
From Russian sword and ball.

---

*The Fountain Spirit.*

THE fountain leaped up silver-pillared, melting as it rose to rain,  
Splashing on the marble basin, in a shower of pearly grain,  
Music rising, music falling, ebbing, flowing o'er again.—  
Oh ! the music ever mounting of that ever singing fountain  
Seemed a merry mingled measure, joyful, yet still racked with pain.

Did it call to birds in heaven to come down to it and drink ?  
Did it bid the sallow roe-deer from the forest to its brink ?  
Had it consciousness, that water ? Had it life, and could it think ?  
Was it rising type of hope ? If not sorrow, why then sink ?—  
Sure the music ever mounting of that ever-singing fountain  
Was the voice of water siren, who had heart and brain to think.

Ripple, ripple, shooting skyward, like a silver arrow, springing  
Like a fresh-born water angel, seeking heaven and still singing,  
Chained to earth, yet leaping skyward in a vain desire of winging.—  
Sure the music ever mounting of that ever-singing fountain  
Was the voice of new-born angel, all its bounty round it flinging,

Like a young king, free and lavish of his newly-welcomed treasure,  
Feeding lilies with the manna of its cool and pearly pleasure,  
Flinging right and left its coin, like a spendthrift sick of leisure.—  
Sure the music ever mounting of that ever singing fountain,  
Was a Mine God's cleaving earth to bear up his silver treasure.

### Twilight in a Tudor Ruin.

THERE were ladies dancing in the upper chambers,  
There were ladies dancing in the lower hall,  
Where the wax lights—silvery, long, and taper—  
Made the gold threads of the scented silken hangings  
Gleam and glisten, shine and sparkle, as they waved upon the wall.

Gold and crimson were the bands of the retainers,  
With red feathers half a yard or so, or more,  
Silver badges on their breasts they stately bore;  
And behind them stared the Cæsars from the hangings,  
And Abraham, and Moses, and the Jewish kings of yore.

---

### The Eve of the Laird's Funeral.

THE gossips are chattering over the bowl;  
The bell may toll  
For the dead man's soul—  
Still they sit gossiping over the bowl—  
Stirring the bowl! stirring the bowl!—  
Crones all gossiping over the bowl.

Eager eyes and listening faces,  
Fingers that point to shadowy places—  
“Lord, what a night for a ship at sea!”  
“Hark to the wind on the fallow lea!”—  
So they are chattering over the bowl, &c., &c.

“A week to-morrow the old man died,  
And none but us to watch by his side.  
Hark how the wind roars over the roof,  
Spurning the tiles like a devil's hoof!”—  
The gossips are chattering over the bowl, &c., &c.



*THE EVE OF THE LAIRD'S FUNERAL.*

---

"Old Sir Richard has gone a week :  
How hard he tried at last to speak,  
As he looked, with a wild and wondering stare,  
At his first wife's picture over the chair."—  
The gossips are chattering over the bowl, &c., &c.

"What is that scratching at the door?—  
Come, gossips, come, just one glass more ;  
And then we'll make the corpse so trim,  
For the great oak coffin is waiting for him!"—  
The gossips are chattering over the bowl, &c., &c.

"I know a chest, where there may be  
An old square parchment, that's worth the fee  
Of the richest lawyer in all Scotland.—  
I don't say more, but you understand."—  
The gossips are chattering over the bowl, &c., &c.

"There's a box below the dead laird's bed.—  
But I've said more than I should have said.  
It may astonish the folk from Perth,  
When the laird is snug under the churchyard earth."—  
The gossips are chattering over the bowl, &c., &c.

"Madam is proud as a royal queen :  
She may think she was never seen ;  
But through that mirror that's over the fire,  
I saw as much as I could desire."—  
The gossips are chattering over the bowl, &c., &c.

"She is proud ; but she'd best beware,  
With her head tossed back and her scornful air!—  
But not a word of what I've said  
Of her, or the lassie, or of the dead!"—  
The gossips are chattering over the bowl, &c., &c.



## Rupert's March.

CARABINE slung, stirrup well hung,  
Flagon at saddle-bow merrily swung ;  
Toss up the ale, for our flag, like a sail,  
Struggles and swells in the hot July gale.  
Colours fling out, and then give them a shout—  
We are the gallants to put them to rout.

Flash all your swords, like Tartarian hordes,  
And scare the prim ladies of Puritan lords ;  
Our steel caps shall blaze through the long Summer days,  
As we, galloping, sing our mad Cavalier lays.  
Then banners advance ! By the Lilies of France,  
We are the gallants to lead them a dance.

Ring the bells back, though the sexton look black,  
Defiance to knaves who are hot on our track.  
"Murder and fire !" shout louder and higher ;  
Remember Edgehill and the red-dabbled mire,  
When our steeds we shall stall in the Parliament hall,  
We'll shake the old nest till the roostree shall fall.

Froth it up, girl, till it splash every curl !  
October's the liquor for trooper and earl ;  
Bubble it up, merry gold in the cup,—  
We never may taste of to-morrow's night's sup.  
(Those red ribbons glow on thy bosom below  
Like apple-tree bloom on a hillock of snow.)

No, by my word, there never shook sword  
Better than this in the clutch of a lord ;  
The blue streaks that run are as bright in the sun  
As the veins on the brow of that loveliest one ;  
No deep light of the sky when the twilight is nigh,  
Glitters more bright than this blade to the eye.

\* \* \* \* \*

Well, whatever may hap, this rusty steel cap  
Will keep out full many a pestilent rap ;  
This buff, though it's old and not larded with gold,  
Will guard me from rapier as well as from cold ;

*RUPERT'S MARCH.*

---

My scarf, rent and torn, though its colour is worn,  
Shone gay as a page's but yesterday morn.

Here is a dint from the jagg of a flint,  
Thrown by a Puritan just as a hint;  
But this stab through the buff was a warning more rough,  
When Coventry city arose in a huff;  
And I met with this gash, as we rode with a crash  
Into Noll's pikes on the banks of the Ash.

No jockey or groom wears so draggled a plume  
As this that's just drenched in the swift-flowing Froom.  
Red grew the tide ere we reached the steep side,  
And steaming the hair of old Barbary's hide;  
But for branch of that oak that saved me a stroke,  
I had sunk there like herring in pickle to soak.

Pistolet crack flashed bright on our track,  
And even the foam of the water turned black.  
They were twenty to one, our poor rapier to gun,  
But we charged up the bank, and we lost only one;  
So I saved the old flag, though it was but a rag,  
And the sword in my hand was snapped off to a jagg.

The water was churned as we wheeled and we turned,  
And the dry brake to scare out the vermin we burned.  
We gave our halloo, and our trumpet we blew:  
Of all their stout fifty we left them but two;  
With a mock and a laugh, won their banner and staff,  
And trod down the cornets as threshers do chaff.

Saddle my roan, his back is a throne,  
Better than velvet or gold, you will own.  
Look to your match, or some harm you may catch,  
For treason has always some mischief to hatch;  
And Oliver's out with all Haslerigg's rout,  
So I am told by this shivering, white-livered scout.

We came over the downs, through village and towns,  
In spite of the sneers, and the curses, and frowns;  
Drowning their psalms, and stilling their qualms,  
With a clatter and rattle of scabbards and arms,  
Down the long street, with a trample of feet,  
For the echo of hoofs to a Cavalier's sweet.

### *RUPERT'S MARCH.*

---

See, black on each roof, at the sound of our hoof,  
The Puritans gather, but keep them aloof;  
Their muskets are long, and they aim at a throng,  
But woe to the weak when they challenge the strong!  
Butt-end to the door, one hammer more,  
Our pikemen rush in, and the struggle is o'er.

Storm through the gate, batter the plate,  
Cram the red crucible into the grate;  
Saddle-bags fill, Bob, Jenkin, and Will,  
And spice the staved wine that runs out like a rill.  
That maiden shall ride all to-day by my side—  
Those ribbons are fitting a Cavalier's bride.

Does Baxter say right, that a bodice laced tight  
Should never be seen by the sun or the light?  
Like stars from a wood shine under that hood  
Eyes that are sparkling, though pious and good.  
Surely this waist was by Providence placed,  
By a true lover's arm to be often embraced.

Down on your knees, you villains in frieze,  
A draught to King Charles, or a swing from those trees;  
Blow off this stiff lock, for 't is useless to knock,—  
The ladies will pardon the noise and the shock.  
From this bright dewy cheek, might I venture to speak,  
I could kiss off the tears though she wept for a week.

Now loop me this scarf round the broken pike-staff,  
'T will do for a flag, though the Crop Heads may laugh.  
Who was it blew? Give an halloo,  
And hang out the pennon of crimson and blue.  
A volley of shot is a welcoming hot,—  
It cannot be troop of the murdering Scot?

Fire the old mill on the brow of the hill,  
Break down the plank that runs over the rill,  
Bar the town gate; if the burghers debate,  
Shoot some to death, for the villains must wait;  
Rip up the lead from the roofing o'erhead,  
And melt it for bullets, or we shall be sped.





*Alte.*

ON the sea-shore at Cyprus stood  
A little sheltered rustic altar  
Where those whom Venus loved could come  
And pious prayers and praises falter.

*CLYTÈ.*

---

'T was humble, yet the Golden Age,  
Ere tyrants were, had kept it guarded,  
And centuries long that little fane  
A sheltering plane had greenly warded.

Up to its marble steps the waves  
Came creeping, courtier-like, in whispers ;  
The zephyrs spoke among the boughs,  
Like lovers, or like infant lispers ;  
Dark violets purpled all the turf  
Beneath that plane-tree's soft green shadow,  
Nowhere the amaranth grew so fair  
As just within that sea-side meadow:

Phædon, a sculptor, Lemnian born,  
Had toiled for years to deck that altar  
With his best art ; no lust for gold  
Or bad men's scorn could make him falter ;  
So he had carved his dead love's face  
As Clytè—praying still in anguish  
That for one hour she might return  
From those dark shades where sad souls languish.

" 'T is done ! " one eve the sculptor cried,  
And knelt in prayer to Aphroditè.  
His dream stood petrified at last,  
That marble nymph—his gentle Clytè.  
The Goddess heard him as he knelt,  
And smiled from rosy clouds, consenting.  
The maid was ferried back to earth,  
Pluto for one short hour relenting.

That swelling breast—the lover's pillow—  
Was now of Parian crystal whiteness ;  
Those Juno arms, that Jove might fold,  
Were of a smooth and radiant lightness ;  
Her hair in rippling wave on wave  
Crowned a fair head so sweetly mournful ;  
The eyes were full of tender grief,  
The full-lipped mouth was witching scornful.

*CLYTÈ.*

The room was dark where Phædon knelt,  
But as he prayed the moonbeams entered,  
And, like a crown of glory pure,  
Upon the brow of Clytè centred;  
Then down her face they gently stole,  
With silver all her raiment sheathing.  
His prayer was answered; Phædon cried,  
"She lives! she lives! I hear her breathing!"

Like one who, rousing from a trance,  
Reluctant wakes, and half in sorrow,  
Clytè stepped from that pedestal—  
Death had been vanquished till the morrow.  
She kissed her lover's burning brow,  
Her soft white arms around him lacing;  
Venus had sent her from the dead  
To soothe him with her sweet embracing.

\* \* \* \* \*

But when day dawned and he awoke,  
That rainbow-dream had passed for ever:  
The nymph had turned to stone again,  
To wake to life and beauty—never.  
With a deep sigh he kissed the lips  
Of that sweet nymph, once more reposing;  
Then seized his shaping steel and clay,  
To toil till life's long day was closing.

He wept not, but, in patience strong,  
Thought of the blissful re-uniting,  
As soldiers do of rest and sleep  
After a long day's toilsome fighting;  
And in his art content he toiled  
To deck that fane of Aphroditè,  
And by him, as he laboured, stood  
His statue of the gentle Clytè.



## The Country Church.

THE blue of the forget-me-not  
Is blossoming in the sky,  
The gentian-flower's most inner heart  
Hath not so deep a dye ;  
'Tis purest sapphire liquefied,  
That glows in glory and in pride.

The young leaves on the elder-rods  
Shine with a thin soft gold ;  
The cock, the farmyard Sultan,  
Struts in the sunshine bold,  
Transparent crimson all his crest,  
Red brazen plumes upon his breast.

A Sabbath stillness fills the air :  
The very larks aloft,  
Scaling the white rose-puffs of cloud,  
Are singing hushed and soft ;  
With pious meditation, feed  
The tranquil cows in the green mead.

Patient and blind, with Samson strength,  
The village church doth stand,  
The hearse-plume yew its only kith  
In all this English land,  
The warder for long centuries  
Of these poor country crofts and leas.

The rainbow glass has gone to dust,  
The dial's lightning-rent,  
The weathercock upon the roof  
Is crazed and tempest-bent ;  
The weatherbeaten tower stands there,  
Rapt in its long unceasing prayer.

A curious latticing of shade  
Under the windows falls,  
A flickering of the yew-tree's gloom  
Wavering on mouldy walls.  
You hear the blackbirds in the calm,  
Between the pauses of the psalm.

The sunshine on the battered tombs  
Sheds benedictions—smiles,  
That passing, bless the children there  
Sitting along the aisles ;  
While swallows underneath the eaves  
Chatter about the coming leaves.

The vicar for a moment stops—  
The thrushes in the laurels  
Break in upon the half-read hymn  
With snatches of their carols ;  
The sparrow on the window-sill  
Chirps with much love, but little skill.

On Sundays, how brave faces crowd  
As the old bell tolls in !  
Glossy their hair, happy their eyes,  
Rich crimson-brown their skin—  
Pulling their forelocks down, they go,  
What time the organ 'gins to blow.







### The Pilgrim's Departure.

THE sun in golden splendour  
 Was sinking o'er the hill,  
 Shedding its rays on mountain-top,  
 On river, and on rill ;  
 When down before a holy shrine,  
 Kneelt one, bound straight for Palestine.

The altar stood beneath a pane,  
 Which dyed the sunlight red ;  
 Like a saint's bright crown of glory,  
 It glowed around his head.  
 And many a peasant gathered there,  
 Joined in the solemn parting prayer.

*AN ADVENTURE OF ROB ROY'S.*

The priest stood at the altar,  
In chasuble arrayed,  
The sun burnt red and fiery  
All down the forest glade ;  
And youth and maid beside the road,  
With sire and mother, praying stood.

O'er hat and staff and sandalled shoon,  
The priest repeats the charm  
That, whether in Ind or Araby,  
Will keep his soul from harm.  
'T was a touching sight the priest to see  
Sign on the robe the crosses three.

Still lower sank the blood-red sun,  
The moon shone faint on high  
Ere scarce day's mighty monarch  
Had left the summer sky.  
That sin-soiled pilgrim of the west  
Crossed his hands on his guilty breast.

No sound broke the sad stillness.  
From the altar step he leapt :  
No sound, save one deep heart-sob—  
Deep as from one that wept.  
He filled his bottle at the rill,  
Then hied him o'er the eastern hill.

"God guide the staff that guides thy feet  
O'er many a league of sand !  
God guard the cowl that fends thy head  
In many a savage land !  
Thy cockle hat, remember thee,  
Proclaims one bound for Galilee.

"God keep thee from the desert asp !  
CHRIST'S Mother shield thee well  
From spear and shaft and catapult  
Of Moor and Infidel !  
Wherever, pilgrim, thou shalt be,  
CHRIST'S holy benison on thee !"

*An Adventure of Rob Roy's.*

(1745.)

IN a small, lonely roadside inn  
Out yon by Bennochie,  
Six Hanoverian soldiers sat  
And played at "Rig-ma-Ree."  
Deep lay the torn and scattered cards ;  
The dice were rattling loud,  
When in there strode a Hielandman  
Like one dropped from a cloud.

He took a hand and played his best,  
But aye the suit went wrong ;  
He paid his gold and threw again,  
But Fate was still too strong.

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Then with a crafty, angry smile  
The cards he slowly felt,  
And tossed the dice into the punch,  
And laughed to see them melt.

Taking a court-card from the pack,  
He crushed it with his heel—  
Against the wall he set his back,  
Defied their flashing steel ;  
Flung in their eyes the painted knaves  
And the vermilion kings ;  
Spurned them and braved that nest of snakes  
With all their threatening stings.

*AN ADVENTURE OF ROB ROY'S.*

"I know you," Rob Macgregor cried,  
"And all the woe and ruin  
You're working in this mountain land,  
And all the sins you're brewing.  
You come from many a smoking strath  
And many a blood-stained village ;  
You slay the children in their beds—  
The father at the tillage."

The sergeant snatched his musket up  
And threw it to "Present" ;  
The bandsman drew his bayonet out  
With little good intent.  
Butt-end, all ready for the blow,  
The third man's firelock swung ;  
The fifer would have drawn his sword,  
But to the sheath it clung.

The Highlandman laughed loud and long,  
Then kicked the benches over,  
Danced three steps of a Highland reel,  
And cried, "I'm Rob the Rover !"  
The brawny sergeant flung at him  
A stool that cleared the table ;  
It hit the bandsman on the shins—  
And then began the Babel.

But suddenly the Highlander,  
With a smile frank and jolly,  
Cried out, "Good folks, one moment, please,  
I've lost my favourite collie.  
One whistle ere the fun begins,  
And then we'll do it hearty ;  
I would not for a thousand crowns  
Break up a pleasant party."

"Ugh ! shmite de fool !" the sergeant cried ;  
The others, with more pity,  
Said, "Let the clod bring in his hoond—  
We'll sell it in next city."

As Rob he whistled shrill and clear,  
Loud laughed the sneering bandsman ;  
Till through the shattered door there rushed  
At least two dozen clansmen.

When Rob, with white rose in his hat,  
Cried out, "God save King Charles !"  
You should have seen the sour grimace  
Distort those coward carles.  
"God save the Stuarts and the right,  
And down with the Pretender,  
And that's your little German laird ;  
From Scotland God defend her !"

And quick his claymore whistled out,  
In every blow a life ;  
The rogues at bay turned pale to see  
The opening of the strife.  
But Rob he cried, "Sheathe all your swords,  
And let these Dutch rats scamper ;  
I trow," he said, "you gibbet-birds,  
This day has been a damper."

For Rob was generous of blood,  
Brave, frank, and lion-hearted,  
And only smiled as up the glen  
They skulkingly departed.  
Then passing round the whisky-horn  
To every brave Macgregor,  
He said, "They'll not forget the cards  
They dealt the Hieland beggar."

If I was bold enough to say  
They left with all their spoil,  
I should not be a truthful man  
(A labourer's worth his toil).  
They left their money and their arms,  
Their coats and all about 'em,  
And, bare as Adam, took the road,  
With curses—Devil doubt 'em !



## Friend or Foe?

(EVE OF SAINT BARTHOLOMEW.)

'T IS the wind that's groaning  
Down the corridor,  
Like the roused sea moaning,  
On a storm-beat shore.  
How the torch is flaring  
In the court below!  
Hark! I hear a footstep;  
Is it friend or foe?

Wild the wind is surging  
Down the avenue;  
Trees in fear are struggling,  
As if they, too, knew  
All that's wrought in Paris  
On this ghastly night.  
Saviour, God in heaven,  
Send the morning light!

Marie, hear the screech-owl,  
From the distant wood,  
Screaming out her warnings  
To her wistful brood.  
Yes, again that glimmer,  
Far across the down.  
That way there is danger—  
There lies Paris town!

François, take your carbine,  
Guard the postern door;  
Robert, with your rapier,  
Watch the upper floor;

We are few—to guard us  
From the murderer's blow,  
Henri, let our word be—  
"Are you friend or foe?"

Roll the powder-barrel  
Near the petronel;  
See the wadding ready,  
And the ball fit well.  
Guise's men are cruel  
As the Medici.  
How the moaning night wind  
Moves the tapestry!

No, 't is but my dreaming,—  
In the mirror look,  
Cabinet and prie-dieu,  
Pictured wall and book.  
Nothing more, my Marie?  
Yet there seem to rise  
Bleeding, writhing faces,  
With beseeching eyes.

Save our dear ones, Paris;  
Huguenots, be brave!  
There is One above us  
Who has power to save.  
Marie, clasp me closer;  
You are faint with fear,  
Marie, dear, remember  
God is ever near.

Though a flood of torches  
Blaze at every door;  
Though the murderers' foot-tramp  
Shake this very floor—  
Calmly trusting Heaven,  
I will bide the blow.  
Marie, courage! ah! that hand—  
"ARE YOU FRIEND OR FOE?"



### **A Day-Dream on the Rhine.**

OH, for a kingdom rocky throned  
Above the brimming Rhine !  
With vassals who should pay their toll

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In many sorts of wine ;  
Above me nought but the blue air,  
And all below the vine.

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*A DAY-DREAM ON THE RHINE.*

I'd plant my throne where legends say,  
In nights of harvest-time,  
King Charlemagne, in golden robe  
(So runs the rustic rhyme),  
Doth come to bless the mellowing crops,  
While the bells of heaven chime;

(Children have heard them!) and a bridge;  
Of gold leaps o'er the stream  
For the king to cross. A maiden once  
Saw its bright arches gleam;  
The priests they burnt her for that sight,  
Calling it "Satan's Dream."

Churches should in my valleys hide,  
Old towers rise on each hill;  
The forge, the farm-house, and the inn,  
Should cluster round the mill,  
And past them all the river broad  
Would flow at its own sweet will.

My stream at noon of fairy gold  
Should crimson turn ere night,  
Then by the magic of the moon  
Change to quicksilver bright.  
At dawn each little wave should be  
Mantled with purple light.

I'd dwell where Charlemagne looked down,  
And, turning to his peers,  
Exclaimed, "Behold, for this fair land  
I've prayed and fought for years."  
Then all the Rhine towers shook to hear  
The earthquake of their cheers.

That day the tide ran crimson red  
(But not with Rhenish wine);  
Not with those vintage streams that through  
The green leaves gush and shine:  
'Twas blood that from the Lombard ranks  
Rushed down into the Rhine.

'Twas here the German soldiers flocked,  
Burning with love and pride,  
And threw their muskets down to kiss  
The soil with French blood dyed.  
"The Rhine — dear Rhine," ten thousand  
Kneeling together, cried. [men

Oh, fairest of the many brides  
Wedded to Father Sea,  
That from thy cold home in the snow  
Trippiest so merrily,  
As if in eager haste of love  
To plight thy fealty;

Thy handmaids are the little streams,  
That to thee flock and throng,  
Each with her own small dower of vines,  
Each with her special song;  
Each like a vein of blood, the more  
To make thee stark and strong.

Fair daughter of the crownèd Alps  
In aspiration bold,  
No frost can bind thy fervent flood,  
That never doth grow old,  
Unchecked by Summer's golden fire,  
Or by fierce Winter's cold.

Oh, special favourite of God,  
Eternal beauty cling  
Around thy banks; let all thy vines  
Together praise and sing,  
And o'er thee angels bend and pause  
With sheathed and reverent wing.

Sweet river! where the laughing hills  
Thy majesty do greet,  
And echoes call from rock to rock,  
All through the noonday heat.  
In earliest dusk the gathering stars  
Above thee love to meet.

*WOLSEY'S LAST INTERVIEW WITH THE KING.*

---

When lovers in the ferry-boat  
Forget the passing tide,  
And, closer drawn, cling lip to lip,  
What though the river's wide,  
And silver clouds no secrets tell  
To the towers on either side ;

When church bells o'er the water speak  
Of God unto the hill,  
Where ruined castles on the cliff  
Speak of God's anger still,  
How strong His arm, how swift His shaft,—  
Who may resist His will ?

Yes, here upon this haunted Rhine  
My kingdom I will found,  
No spectre knight, or goblins blue,  
My purpose shall confound ;  
I'll bring the Golden Age again  
To this old feudal ground.

---

*Wolsey's Last Interview with the King.*

YOU know that thick hot air before a storm,  
Heavy and lurid, when the very kine,  
Languid and restless, switch their tails, and moan,  
And paw the ground, impatient for the rain ?  
Such was the air that day around the Court.  
The King was strangely silent : rang no bell,  
Nor called his hounds, nor chid a lazy page,  
Nor sent for hawks, nor touched his favourite lute ;  
But sat close at his books, walled in with rolls,  
And abbey deeds, and old cathedral charts,  
Nor wine nor pasty tasted all that morn.  
'Twas ominous of ill—of war with France,  
Of news from Florence, message from the Doge,  
Of Lanzknechts gathering in the German towns.  
“Grind sword and spear,” I said ; “roll cannon out !”  
If Harry bide like this, 'tis but the lull  
Before the lion's leap—woe to his prey !  
Ye abbots, tremble in your padded cells !  
Warders of Calais, look to bar and bolt !

*WOLSEY'S LAST INTERVIEW WITH THE KING.*

---

Before the shouting English wake you up,  
Or a shrill archer's horn, that bids you turn,  
Foretell a bitter rain of stinging steel,  
And "Ho for Merry England!" stir French air.  
What! Wolsey not at Court for three long days?  
It bodeth ill for some: that heavy axe  
Had best be ground, and crimson block be fit,  
For death and doom. But hark! a distant shout  
And trumpets scarce so confident as once.—  
He comes, the trusty one—the Cardinal.  
"Room for my lord!" the boastful heralds cry.  
Cross-bearers, see, and lusty halberdmen,  
To every scarlet man a gilded axe.—  
Yes, there his great red hat and the broad seal,  
The red-trapped mules, the stately men-at-arms,  
Close steel from top to toe, the laughing boys,  
The solemn priests, with cope and chasuble,  
And, all but last, that very humble soul,  
The true apostle of these later days,  
With eyes malign, and close-clenched, fleshless lips,  
And body swollen out with greed and pride.  
Disdaining earth and air, no glance for heaven;  
Not e'en one gracious look for those who wait,  
Though knight and noble every single one.  
"Angels are proud?"—Yes, firstly Lucifer,  
Who by that fell. Upon his wicked thumb  
See that great ruby; 't was a Percy's once.  
That sapphire at his neck adorned a pyx  
At Durham ere they stripped the sacred shrine.  
The nuns of Ely made that gold cloth pouch  
That shines with diamonds. Bartimæus sure  
Might beg some hours ere he could buy those gems.  
And mark! all down the staircase as he comes  
The plumes sink low as corn before the wind;  
Old, young, and rich, and poor, and fool, and wise,  
Bend like a forest when the sou'-west blows,  
All to'ards the Red Hat—every face one way.  
For where this Wolsey smiles is fortune, wealth,  
And where he frowns despair and penury.—  
But mark as rise the pliant servile herds,  
And match each face behind with that before:  
Here joy and worship, there but fear and hate;  
The coming murder in the eye of some,  
And hands on dagger-hilts, and fists that clench:



### THE DYING SENESCHAL.

---

All the poor, base, obsequious worship gone.  
These are the slaves that bend their brainless heads  
To this base butcher's son, this Cardinal,  
This robber of the Church, this murderer.—  
Why, who stoop lower when CHRIST's self descends  
In very flesh, and the bell duly rings  
For the world's homage? Prush!—the lazar crone  
Could not cringe deeper; but behind Red Hat  
Some whisper gibes and grind out muttered threats;  
Hands press to secret knife and pistolet,  
Half drawn in mute despair of a revenge.—  
And lo! the placid priest with upraised hand  
Blessed all the kneeling crowd of spurious friends,  
Lifted the great black curtain, and passed in.

---

### The Dying Seneschal.

[SUPPOSED to be the lamentation of Sir Walter Fitzosbert, one of the five Norman knights who conquered Gwent; and who, if we can believe the Chronicle of Ernulphus, was taken prisoner by Sir Geoffry Mauleverer, Lord of Goodrich, and died of famine in the Yellow Tower of that castle, A.D. 1182.

The knight is dust,  
And his good sword is rust,  
And his soul is with the saints we trust.]

I DID not think I could have borne  
So long this dull weight at my heart  
The weary night; the lingering day  
As loath to dawn as to depart.  
I never thought this aching brain  
Would now have burst, or borne so long  
The torture of this scorn and wrong.  
All nature's full of liberty:  
Look at yon clouds, how glad they be,  
They seem fresh loosed from slavery;  
The wind is free each leaf to kiss  
On every forest tree that is;  
I feel it at my prison bars  
Drive swifter than the falling stars.

The stream flows on with ceaseless motion  
To do glad homage to the ocean.  
The wild birds wind their unchecked way  
Through all the bright clouds' fair array.  
Yet I, the freest of the free,  
Rot here in thralldom's infamy.  
Was never knight so free as I—  
Free as the falcon in the sky,  
So blithe, and glad, and debonair,  
Free as the restless wandering air,  
Free as the white trout of the lake,  
Free as the shy and wily snake.  
I cared not for the scorching heat,  
When hot suns on my armour beat;

THE DYING SENESCHAL.

I cared not for the Winter's cold,  
When lambs were frozen in the fold ;  
When it chilled through his dark fur robe the  
    mole,  
And the dormouse nestling deeper stole.  
'Then would I rest my helmèd head  
Upon a root, the snow my bed.  
I the wild mountain deer could tire,  
Could tame the unbroke charger's fire,  
Could swim the lake, stem the red ford,  
Though cumbered with my spear and sword,  
Could bend the bow of a man of mould,  
Could track the eagle to his hold.  
Fool that I am to waste regret,  
While with my blood the stones are wet.  
Oh ! for some human thing to see,  
Though it came but to mock at my misery—  
Though it came my grief and shame to share ;  
And, instead of pious word and prayer,  
Beheld me with a cruel stare ;  
'T were pleasant as the glimpse of day  
To forest traveller astray.  
I watched me by the livelong hour  
My only friend—a simple flower,  
That grew from a chink in a massive stone  
On the parapet 'neath my prison grate,  
Spring up untended and alone.  
I viewed it early, viewed it late—  
Was never flower so fresh and fair ;  
And through the balmy Summer air  
It shed a calm repose on me,  
Like the sight of happy infancy.  
God's benison, dear thing, on thee !

I watched the gentle friendly weed,  
Each sweet flower ope and shed its seed ;  
But the rough wind plucked it leaf by leaf,  
Till nothing was left for me but grief ;  
Just at the closing of the day  
I saw the last one whirled away.  
Unhappy wretch ! I seem to blight  
Even things lovely in my sight.  
'T was the only thing I loved, and now,  
Beshrew the tear ! has this pale brow  
No greater grief, that it should weep ?  
Proud heart, take cheer ! I saw it creep .  
O'er the rude stone that shelter gave,  
Where its seed had found a dark small grave,  
And strew it with its flowerets fair,  
As if it loved its gifts to share ;  
For everything but the human brood  
Hath got some touch of gratitude.  
It rose in Spring, and all through May  
The flower had made its silent way ;  
And every shower that passèd o'er  
Added but loveliness the more ;  
And every cloud that by us past  
Some bright reflection on it cast ;  
The wind that tears the forest tree  
Lent gentle influence to thee.  
But, hush thee, tongue ! I feel each vein  
Throb slower, and a keener pain  
Gnaw at my heart : the guarding slave  
Shall never hear a true knight crave  
A look of pity ; the wolf dies silent in his  
    den,  
And so do all true Norman men.





### The Feast of the Sirens.

I CAME to the sea,  
And it whispered to me  
Tales of sorrow and mystery ;  
It kissed my feet, for my voice was sweet,  
By the silvery sand where the rough tides meet,  
And the waves leapt up to my knee.

*THE LAST OF THE SIRENS.*

---

The waves like children are to me ;  
They gambol, and laugh, and race so free,  
And bow at my crown of sovereignty ;  
And the wild winds shriek when I 'gin to speak,  
And the fiercest blast at my voice grows weak,  
For I am one of the Sirens three.

When my soft voice calls,  
Each wild wave falls  
Down at my feet, and crouching crawls.  
The whale, my hound, leaps on with a bound,  
And the seals bark loud when they hear the sound,  
And rush through the breakers' foaming walls.

The dead men float,  
To hear the note  
Of the harp tunes I have learned by rote,  
Lashed to the spars that the erring stars,  
Venus the pale, and red-gashed Mars,  
Led where the ships the sharp reef smote.

And you can hear,  
When the air is clear,  
Faint cries of rage, and pain, and fear ;  
Their pangs grow sharp when they hear my harp,  
Whose strings no wintry winds can warp,  
On the grassy shore that seems so near.

O'er their glazing eye  
White shadows fly,  
As I sing a melodious lullaby ;  
Then laugh and scream as my beacon's gleam  
Leaps up with a brazen hell-fire gleam,  
To light the wretch to his misery.

The birds know me,—  
The gull of the sea,  
And the cormorant, black as black may be.  
I give them food in my loving mood,  
And smooth their wings, and ruffle their hood :  
The dead are their meat, and still shall be.

*THE LAST OF THE SIRENS.*

---

When the galley sails  
Are rent in the gales,  
And the gilded oar the black slave fails  
To poise and lift, I make them drift  
On the sharp white horn of the leeward rift,  
As their bark I greet and hail.

Then with cadence sweet,  
My harp I beat,  
And I foot the sarads with my snowy feet.  
And their shrieks and cries to the stormy skies  
Are to me the dearest of melodies,  
And I laugh as the strong tides howling meet.

But, oh! misery  
To those merchants three,  
Steering to Greece from Sicily,  
With a deep, deep hold, that brimmed with gold,  
And pearls and jewels a thousandfold,  
And bales that were bursting with spicery.

And, woe! woe! woe!  
To those who blow  
The walrus horns as the calm seas flow;  
Grim men in mail, with a crimson sail,  
Who have struck the shark and wounded the whale,  
And on to the western islands go.

Ah, me! ah, me!  
For the maidens three,  
Who come the fishermen youth to see;  
That golden hair, that they deem so fair,  
Shall bleach and crisp in the salt sea air,  
In the caves below where the krakens be.

And, alas!  
When it comes to pass,  
That a mother and child are going to mass,  
A tender bit is that babe, I wit,  
For the dog-fish fighting in crowds for it,  
A fathom below these waves of glass.

*finis.*



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